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The Holy Prophet MOHAMMAD Through Different Lights.

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The Holy Prophet

MOHAMMAD

Through Different Lights

by

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etc. : : : etc.

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PREFACE.

The life of the Holy Prophet Mohammad, his sayings and habits, are not only written in Urdu, Persian and Arabic but also in European languages, of which the books in English abound. Not only the Muslims by writing the life of the Prophet have acknowledged his gratitude and obligation on the world, but also the non-Muslim writers have done so. Muir, Weil, Wustenfield, Becker and Von Kremmer in their writings have acknowledged the greatness of the personality of the Holy Prophet. But there is a great difference between the life of Prophet written by non-Muslim writers such as Muir etc., and those written by the Muslims, especially those who were Arabs, and had been in the time of the Companions if not in the time of the Prophet. The European writers not only did not know Arabic, but also made some grave mistakes, such as Amrou As, for Amr bin Aas. I say when these writers have made such silly mistakes in pronouncing the Arabic words, then all that they have written could not be correct. On the other hand there are some European writers, who really took pains to study and painted the Prophet in his true colours. Carlyle is one of such writers who has studied the literature about the Prophet correctly and without prejudice and reproduced it correctly. He not only writes that the Prophet of Islam was the greatest of all Prophets, but also in his book 'Heroes and Hero Worship' admits, without prejudice, that the Prophet possessed a great and charming character.

As for those European writers who have written the life of the Prophet, by converting the truths and facts into lies and falsehoods, only to please their bigotted brethren, and the Christian Clergy, the less said the better. Can those who want to learn the life of the Holy Prophet be sent to Abu Jehl, who was the bitterest enemy of the Prophet, and was blind with rage and hatred to all the better and finer qualities of the Prophet? My answer is an emphatic, No. Those who want to learn the true life of the Prophet from correct and reliable sources, should go to those who were with the Prophet all the time, and who were present with him on all occasions, and of

all these the best to go to is Ali, for every one knows that he was always with the Prophet from his very childhood, and about whose learning and letters all the books of Hadith are full of the praises of the Prophet.

No book has so far been written in which all the qualities, all the different modes and moods, and all the various departments of the public and private activities of the Prophet were not presented to show that he was a great personage in every respect. All the books so far written are either historical or biographical but none are written to show all qualities, and all the manners of the Prophet that were enviable in every respect. In this book I have endeavoured to show the Holy Prophet Mohammad in all his various characteristics and in all colours, and the conclusion whether or not he was great and perfect in every respect, the readers will decide for themselves. No event or happening in which the Prophet took any part is left from being mentioned. Having regard to the modern tendencies somethings are written in a way, so as to impress that no Prophet or person like Mohammad (Peace be on him) was ever born or would ever be born, which is also a fact, because the Prophet himself had said, "There is no Prophet after me." Many Prophets from Allah came but none achieved, the accomplishment of a divine mission considering specially the dark age, and the most ignorant and ungodly people into which he was sent. It is easy to die once on the gallows or rope but it is immeasurably difficult, hard and painful to know that there are thousands of ropes hanging to strangle one on all sides, not talking of other tortures as throwing of stones and strewing of thorns in the path. It was with reference to this that the Prophet had said, that no Prophet was subjected to such atrocious tortures, and cruelties as he was, "Ma Ooziya Nabiyan Misl Ma Oozeet".

For a long time the world wanted a guide and preacher who could make human beings, human and solve all their problems, and show them a path by following which they could make this earth a heaven and heaven of peace and happiness. Such a guide came to the world in the person of the Holy Prophet Mohammad, but all the world failed to discover him, the result of which is that wars, strifes bloodshed and discontent are still to be seen in it.

The world today, as before, is eagerly searching for rules and regulations which could solve the problem of the life of man. It is quite possible, therefore, that if the life of the Prophet is presented to these searchers of truth, as it ought to be, they will find a solution to all their querries, by following which they could win both the worlds. However hard the Christian missionaries, and others may try to vilify the life of the Holy Prophet by spreading the poisonous literature, it would not effect those who are tolerant, just and learned. Swami Rama Nand, the successor of Swami Shardha Nand, having seen the truth writes that in different times, different reformers came and preached to the world and tried that human beings by following the path of God and Truth may lead a life of peace and happiness, but none succeeded in this as the Prophet of Islam, whose greatest miracle was that he transformed the whole ignorant, dark, superstitious, corrupted and divided Arab into one united, great, learned and civilized Arab, and prays to God that He should let true Muslims born in India, for the salvation of the country. This shows that there is a magnetism in the life of the Prophet which attracts such bigotted enemies like the Arya leader, and such learned men like George Bernard Shaw, who has predicted that the religion of the world in near future will be either Islam or something very much like Islam.

When the Woking Muslim Mission of England and Mr. Khwaja Kamaluddin presented to Europe the true picture of the Prophet many embraced Islam, and many are embracing, commenting on which London Daily writes that every day one Englishman is becoming a Muslim.

Such expressions of opinions are not at all extraordinary from intelligent beings. The Prophet did not come for the Arabs only, but he came for the whole world, as the Quran itself says "Inna Arsalnaka Rahmatun Lil Alameen." When first an Irani learnt of the prophethood of Mohammed, he left everything and went to Medina where the Prophet then was, and when he found the Prophet, a true messenger of God he embraced Islam, became a follower of the Prophet and who is still known to all Muslims as Salman Farsi. The Prophet was always kind to him and counted him as one of the best

Companions. Similarly today if any one could see with trut eyes, then, even after 1350 years souls could be saved. To do a little deliberation and courage are required and the requisite tr without which nothing could be gained as God has said.

THE AUTHOR.

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Bird's eye-view of the Holy Prophet's city "EL–Medina"
along with his tomb where he lies in rest.

CHAPTER I.

THE LAND OF ARABIA.

Arabia proper, comprising Mesopotamia and the Arabian Syria, occupies a central position in the Old World of Asia, Africa and Europe. It is known as **Jazirat-ul-Arab,** or the Arabian Island, bounded as it is on almost all its sides by seas and rivers—the Indian Ocean on the south, the Mediterranean and the Red Sea on the west, and the Persian Gulf on the east, the Tigris and the Euphrates traversing its eastern and northern parts. It has an area of twelve hundred thousand square miles, a third of it being covered by sandy regions. There are practically no rivers, excepting the small streams here and there, lost and dried up in the desert. A chain of mountains runs from south to north, the highest point being 8000 feet in height.

In such an unfertile country, agricultural produce of any kind is out of question, dates being the only main produce. In ancient days it was noted for its gold, silver, precious stones and spices. To the Arabs, the camel is the most valuable and useful animal.

Of the many parts or provinces into which Arabia is divided, Hedjaz has its own importance, historical as well as geographical. In it, is situated the sacred

land of **Haram**—the forbidden or sacred territory held in high veneration from time immemorial, where warfare of any kind is strictly forbidden, for, within its precincts is the sacred house of Kaba. Mecca, Madina and Taif are its chief towns, with Jedda and Yembo as the chief ports (for pilgrims) of Mecca and Madina respectively. Mecca is enclosed on all sides by mountains. From very ancient times, long before the advent of the Prophet and Islam, it has been the religious capital for the whole of Arabia where was situated the House of God, attracting the Arab pilgrims from far and near. Of the antiquity of Kaba, Sir William Muir writes thus :—

"A very high antiquity must be assigned to the main features of the religion of Mecca.....Dioderus Siculus, writing about half a century before our era, says of the part of Arabia washed by the Red Sea, 'there is in their country a temple greatly revered by all the Arabs.' These words must refer to the Holy House of Mecca, for we know of no other Temple which ever commanded the universal homage of Arabia..... Tradition represents the Kaba as from time immemorial the scene of pilgrimage from all quarters of Arabia—from Yemen, Hadramaut, and the shores of the Persian Gulf, from the desert of Syria, and from the distant environs of Hira and Mesopotamia, men yearly flocked to Mecca. So extensive a homage must have had its beginning in an extremely remote age."

In the Quran, the Kaba is referred to as the first house "built for men," (3: 95) the first house built for the worship of God, and the Holy Quran also mentions that this sacred house existed even before Abraham. (2. 125)

Yasrib was the original name for Medina, and it became to be known as Madinat-un-Nabi, or the Prophet's town, when the Prophet began to have his residence there. It is 270 miles to the north of Mecca, and is also an ancient and important town. It is not so barren as Mecca. It has its cultivation and its fruit-bearing trees in plenty. Amalekites were its first inhabitants. Then came the Jews, the Aus and Khazraj, the latter two, the followers of the Prophet, being known as the Ansars or the Helpers. After his historic flight from Mecca to this town, the Prophet lived here for the rest of the life-time and his tomb stands here to this day.

The second important province of Arabia was Yemen, the most fertile and the most civilised spot in Arabia, with its relics of magnificent buildings. It had its huge irrigation works and was the centre for the trade in minerals, precious stones and spices.

In the interior of Arabia was Najd, a rich and fertile plateau, some three to four thousand feet above sea-level.

Hijr, to the north of Medina, was another place of importance. So was also Khaiber where within the strong walls of the fortress the Jews defended themselves against the Moslem army.

Mecca and Madina occupy a very important and unique place in the wonderful drama of the life and career of the Holy Prophet. They have acquired an immortal glory and grandeur. Mecca, with its unquestioned antiquity and sanctity, with its glorious House of God, stands to this day breathing the very

spirit of the greatest Prophet in the world who was destined to be born there. The least fertile region gave the most fertile religion. Blessed Arabia,—Arabia blessed by God, if not by Nature! "Most surely the first house appointed for men is the one at Bekka, blessed and a guidance for the Nations." (3. 95)

" When the West was sunk in darkness, a bright star rose in the Eastern firmament and gave light and comfort to a groaning world. Islam is not a false religion. · Let Hindus study it reverently and they will love it even as I do."

—MAHATMA GANDHI

" I become more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and his own mission."

—IBID

" Few and simple as the positive precepts of Muhammad up to this time appear, they had wrought a marvellous and a mighty work. Never, since the day when primitive Christianity started the world from its sleep, and waged a mortal combat with Heathenism, had men seen the like arousing of spiritual life, the like faith that suffered sacrifice and took joy in the cause of good for conscience's sake."

—SIR WILLIAM MUIR

CHAPTER II.

ARABIA BEFORE ISLAM.

The ancient Arabs, the aboriginal races, are called the Baida, consisting of the races called the A'd the Samood, Tasan and Jadis. The A'd and the Samood are mentioned in the Quran. First, the A'd dominated over Arabia, Egypt and other places, and then their place of suzerainty was taken by the Samood. The Samood were replaced by Banu Qahtan of Yemen who also rose to great power. The Aus and Khazraj of Medina were the offshoots of this Banu Qahtan tribe. These several races come under the category of **Arabia,** or pure Arabs. Then came the progeny of Ismael called Mustariba or naturalized Arabs. This progeny gradually multiplied into numerous tribes, the Quraish being one of them. The Quraish, as we shall see, were the most important tribe in Mecca. They were divided into many clans, and the Prophet came from the clan called the Banu Hashim. In fact, all the tribes in Arabia were divided into many clans, each clan being again sub-divided into many families. Besides these native tribes, there were also the Jews and the Christians in Arabia. Medina and its neighbourhood was an important centre of the Jews.

What was the general state of Arabia before the advent of the Great Prophet, Muhammad? It was "on the verge of a fiery abyss," as the Holy Quran puts it.

The people were sunk in the lowest depths of superstition, ignorance, cruelty and vice, thoroughly barbarous and no better than beasts, without the slightest tinge of civilized life. The country was torn asunder by internecine feuds, tribe against tribe and clan against clan. There was no settled form of government to keep order and to effect peace. The very lives of the Arabs were of an unsettled nature, for, they led a nomadic life, wandering with their cattle, halting and pitching up their tents at places where they could get fresh water and the means of subsistence. Wine, women, war and vices summed up their lives. The inhospitable soil must be held partly responsible for the sort of life they led, for, the physical features of a country largely influence the history and life of its people. No doubt, there were some redeeming features in the generally barbarous nature of the Arabs. Hospitality, bravery, generosity, manliness, tribal fidelity, were some of the noble traits in their character. But all these good qualities were dimmed and shadowed by their dark lives of horrible vices and inhuman cruelties. The course of such at people was entirely deflected through a differen channel by the magic touch of a great personality who was, after all, one among them; who was, of course, of a taintless character, entirely free from all their vices. He marvellously changed the very course of the world's history.

The religion of the Arabs was idolatry, superstition and barbarity of the worst type. Innumerable were their stone gods and goddesses. Every stone was a god or goddess. Literally and truly, they had more gods and goddesses than the number of days in a year.

Their belief was that God has distributed the discharge of various functions to each one of these. For any little thing they desired, they turned to these idols, invoking their blessings and help. Any good-looking piece of stone was enough for them for their worship, nay, they worshipped trees and sand-heaps. Even men of wealth and fame were considered being worthy of worship and adoration, and angels were considered as the daughters of God. Before going on a journey they would first secure four roughly hewn stones, three to cook on and one to worship. If they were unable to take four, even three would suffice, the stones becoming gods when they were not needed for cooking. They would take out one and worship it before continuing their journey. Besides the three hundred and sixty idols that were set up in the Kaba, (the house of God was thus converted into a place of hellish heathenism and idolatry) each tribe and household had its separate idol or idols. Idol-worship, in brief, became a part and parcel of their lives, and they believed nothing could be obtained, no divine favour was possible, without the intercession of these idols. "They would prostrate before them, circumambulate around them, offer sacrifices to them, and set apart some of the produce of their fields and their animals as an offering to them." Besides such gross idolatry, they regarded the sun, the moon, the stars and the air as gods, as controllers of their destinies, and worshipped them as such. Their religion was, on the whole, a chain of superstition and ignorance.

Superstitions—they had a bundle of them and their lives were full of them. They believed and had faith in all sorts of queer things, such as genii and evil

spirits, charms and incantations. They believed the soul was a germ that got into the body of a child at birth, and went on growing and left the body only after death, and then it assumed the form of an owl, and hovered over the tomb. If a bird crossed a path from right to left, they considered it a very bad omen. Some believed there was another life after death; these would tie a camel to a tomb, and let it starve to death, believing that on the last day, the deceased would mount on its back and ride to heaven. They had great faith in fortune tellers and sooth-sayers. It was their custom to enter the house by the back-door when any calamity happened to them. In time of drought, they would fasten dry blades of grass and underwood to a cow's tail and set fire thereto and drive the animal to the mountains. They thought the flame of fire resembled a flash of lightning and would, by reason of similarity, attract rainfall. The custom of infanticide that existed among many tribes, considering it a disgrace and insult to have a daughter, was one of the worst and greatest superstitions that was responsible for the very low position of women in Arab society.

With so much of superstition, ignorance, and irreligion behind, nothing need be said about their education and general knowledge. That was a closed chapter to them. But writing was not unknown to them, though they did not practically turn it to any use. The so-called literate could be counted on fingers. There existed poetry of a very loose character reflecting their loose lives.

We have already hinted about the general social life of the Arabs who were mostly nomadic—an un-

settled, irresponsible and immoral life. The nature of their life was the least suited to implant in them social and political virtues. The few that had settled in villages and towns were in constant fighting and bloodshed. There was no central government to enforce law and order. The whole of Arabia was divided into little states, and each state or clan had its separate political unit, as well as its own chief, who, whenever he thought proper would lead it in battle against another clan. There were a few provincial governments, but these were too weak to enforce justice and order.

When not fighting, wine, women and song was their motto. Wine, women, wars, and vices—these aptly sum up their general attitude towards life. Gambling was their chief occupation; it was a daily pastime and the very few who did not indulge in it were jeered at. As to drink, it was as great a vice as gambling. Intoxicating liquors were used like water in nearly every household. There was not a house that had not its large store of wine in pitchers. And adultery which was very common among them gave a finishing touch to their social vices.

It was no wonder then that women occupied an unimaginably degraded and low position in Arab society, and were treated as mere chattel. The cruel practice of infanticide was an outcome of the belief that to have a daughter was something disgraceful and insulting. "On hearing of the birth of a daughter, the father's face would turn black with deep grief and anxiety. He had either to bury her alive or to put up with social disgrace."—(16 : 58 - 59). Sometimes the

mother herself had to commit the barbarous crime. Those girls who by any chance escaped death at birth, were put to awful and mean uses when they grew up. They were made to work like beasts of burden, and were regarded as beings without soul, feelings and emotion. Women were not entitled to any share in the property, neither from father nor from husband. In the absence of a male issue, the property used to go to the nearest male relation and not to the daughter.

A man had as many wives as he wished, besides any number of mistresses. Polyandry was also in vogue among the Arabs. Prostitution was rife among them. Married women were forced to have other lovers beside their own husbands, and there was the practice called **"Istibza"**, whereby married women were allowed by their husbands to have sex relations with others for the sake of off-spring. Women servants were made prostitutes just to earn money for their masters. A son could even marry his step-mother. The law of divorce was equally loose. A man could divorce his wife as many times as he wanted. "The worst-type of obscene language was used in expressing sex relations. Stories of love and illicit intercourse were as shamelessly narrated as proudly in verses of the most indecent type. Women of high families were openly addressed in love-songs." Women were in such a helpless and hopeless condition.

"Corruption appeared on land and sea." (30 : 41). Indeed, there was corruption and degeneracy, not only among the Arabs, but also among the Christians,

Jews and others. The whole world was in a spiritual torpor. The Kaba itself, within which were the divers idols of divers religions, was symbolical of the deplorable state of affairs. There were a few, here and there, who were atheists and who believed in no religion. These laughed and jeered at those who believed in idol-worship. There were also a few who practised such religions as Sali, Abrahimi, Christianity and the Jewish religion. The followers of the Sali religion believed in a book called "Sheeshot", and in the Prophets Sheeshbin Adam and Idris. In this religion they had prayers seven times a day, and a month's fasting in a year, and they believed in the worship of planets. The followers of the Abrahimi religion were also polytheists, the keeping of a beard, circumcision, and sacrifice, were the essentials of their religion. They had their own idols in the Kaba, among them was one of Abraham and one of his son, Ishmael. The idol of Ishmael had seven arrows in its hand, and each arrow had a different name, and was these for a different purpose. The Jews had also become idolators, and had their idols in Kaba as well. The Christians had also made the idol of Holy Mary, with the child Jesus in her lap, and that also was in the Kaba. In fact, the Kaba was full of idols of divers creeds, showing that idolatory and corruption was everywhere.

See what Sir William Muir writes about Christianity of those days. "Moreover, the Christianity of the seventh century was itself decrepit and corrupt. It was disabled by contending schisms, and had substituted the puerilities of superstition for the pure and expansive faith of the early ages."

The world in general and Arabia, in particular, was thus wrapped in darkness—in rank superstition, idolatory and ignorance, before the advent of the Holy Prophet. He came with the Divine Light that flushed swift through the darkest spot.

"These Arabs, the man Muhammad, and that one century,—is it not as if a spark had fallen, one spark, on a world of what seemed black unnoticeable sand; but lo, the sand proves explosive power, blazes heaven-high from Delhi to Grenada! I said, the great man was always as lightning out of heaven; the rest of men waited for him like fuel, and then they too would flame."

—THOMAS CARLYLE

"No one, I presume, would deny that to Muhammad's contemporaries his religion was an immense advance on anything they had previously believed in. It welded together the disunited tribes, and lifted the nation to the forefront of the important powers in the world."

—DR. MARCUS DODS

"He (Muhammad) was born in a country where political organization, and rational faith, and pure morals were unknown. He introduced all three. By a single stroke of masterly genius he simultaneously reformed the political condition, the religious creed, and the moral practice of his countrymen."

—REV. STEPHEN

CHAPTER III.

THE LIGHT THAT DISPELLED DARKNESS.

Veni, Vidi, Vici; he came, he saw, and he conquered. This is most aptly applicable with regard to the marvellous success of the Prophet in his mission, effected within a period of two decades. Barbarous, brutal, and idol-infested Arabia was infused with quite a different and new life that knew no longer any of its vices—gambling, drink, adultery, infanticide, and the like, where woman was raised from her degraded position and given a respectable status in society, and where the worship of the one God was enforced in the place of the countless gods and goddesses. It was a renaissance in the widest sense that infused the whole world itself with fresh vigour and vitality. It was the dawn of a new era. That an ordinary man from Arabia itself, one among them, should bring about all these changes is indeed a marvel of marvels.

What a miraculous change the Prophet was able to effect among his followers is given in the following words of Jafar, (what he spoke to the Christian King of Abyssinia) one of the ninety Moslems who took shelter in that Christian Kingdom. He said: "We were an ignorant and misled people; we worshipped images, ate dead bodies, were lewd, ill-treated our neighbours, and the strong dispoiled the weak of their property. We had long been in this condition when God sent a Prophet to us from amongst our own people, whose

noble birth, truthfulness, honesty and righteousness were well-known to us. He called us to God, to worship Him, and Him only, and to leave off adoring the idols and stones before which our fathers and forefathers had knelt. He ordered us to obey God alone, and not to make anyone His equal. He made it incumbent upon us to offer up prayer, to give alms, to fast, when not sick or travelling. He commanded us to speak the truth, to give back safe and whole what is entrusted to us by others, to be affectionate to our relations and kind to our neighbours, to shun wicked acts, licentiousness and bloody quarrels. He told us not to bear false witness; not to deprive orphans of their property, not to impute bad motives to nor be suspicious of women. We have taken his advice and admonitions to heart; have believed in his truthfulness, have followed all the orders which God has made known to us; and have believed in the unity of God." This is a true gist of what the Prophet did, a true gist of his faith.

Sir William Muir says:—

"Few and simple were the precepts of Muhammad. His teachings had wrought a marvellous and a mighty work. Never since the days when primitive Christianity startled the world from its sleep and waged mortal combat with heathenism, had men seen the like arousing of spiritual life, and the like faith that suffered sacrifices and took joyfully the spoiling of goods for conscience' sake.....Thirteen years before the Hijra, Mecca lay lifeless in this debased state. What a change had those thirteen years now produced! A band of several hundred persons had

rejected idolatry, adopted the worship of one God and surrendered themselves implicitly to the guidance of what they believed to be a revelation from Him, praying to the Almighty with frequency and fervour, looking for pardon to his mercy and striving to follow after good works, alms-giving, chastity and justice. They now lived under a constant sense of the Omnipotent power of God and His Providential care over the minutest of their concerns.....Muhammad was the minister of life to them, the source under God of their new-born hopes, and to him they yielded an implicit faith."

See what Carlyle says:—

"A poor shepherd people, roaming unnoticed in its deserts since the creation of the world: a HeroProphet was sent down to them with a word that they could believe. See, the unnoticed becomes world-noticeable, the small has grown world-great; within one century afterwards, Arabia is at Granada, on this end, at Delhi on that; glancing with valour and splendour and the light of genius, Arabia shines through long ages over a great section of the world."

And Syed Ameer Ali says in his "Spirit of Islam" thus :—

"What a change had these few years witnessed: The angel of heaven had veritably passed through the land, breathing harmony and love into the hearts of those who had hitherto been sunk in the most revolting semibarbarism. What had once been a moral desert, where all laws, human and divine, were condemned

and infringed without remorse, was now transformed into a garden".

The Holy Prophet consolidated the Arabs; from a divided people, they soon became a united nation, each and every individual working together and sympathising with each other, instead of fighting as before. The Quran says: "Thank God, who had bestowed so many things for your benefit; before, you were the enemies of one another, and fought among yourselves, but now Allah had made you regard one another as brothers, by placing love and sympathy in your hearts."

The Holy Prophet changed all misconceptions about women into something very beautiful and grand. "Women shall have the same rights over men, as men have over them", is the Quranic injunction—the Magna Charta of women's franchise. The Prophet observed: "The best of you is he who treats his wife best". He taught the Arabs to regard them as friends and companions, and to be kind and loving to them. He said, "a person who does not show kindness, should not expect kindness from God". He taught them to regard infanticide as something very shocking and very displeasing to God, and it was soon put an end to. He had a great regard for the rights of women; since the passing away of the matriarchal form of society the women were, for the first time, emancipated by the Prophet. He showed by his personal example, by his own ideal attitude towards his wives, the love, care, and respect that were due to them. Thus woman, who was considered the lowest of the low, was lifted to a position of status and dignity.

The Prophet's spiritual and moral force worked wonders in all directions. Arabia was entirely relieved by the long-standing curses of drink and gambling. "It is related that wine flowed like rain-water in the streets of Medina". The very pots were broken to pieces. Total prohibition was enforced within no time at a place where drinking was something like drinking mere water.

The Prophet took very effective steps for the gradual, but complete eradication of the worst evil that existed in society then, not only in Arabia, but throughout the western countries. I refer to slavery that existed in its worst and most inhuman form. Even for this single, successful, and lasting reform, that he was able to carry out so wonderfully through sheer moral force, he will be deemed the greatest benefactor of humanity, and consequently the whole world ought to be ever indebted to him for his far-seeing, practical, and deeply sympathetic measures in this direction. His brotherhood was not something theoretical or sentimental, but it was flawlessly rational and practical, that uplifted the down-trodden, oppressed and depressed section of mankind to a better position and status in society. The very life and career of the Prophet will bear eloquent testimony to the fact that the world has not produced a better friend and guide for the depressed and the oppressed. Almost two-thirds of the first believers in his faith were slaves, and many of them had undergone untold sufferings and persecutions, had willingly and cheerfully sacrificed their very lives in his noble Cause. Look at the life of Zaid. He became so much attached to the Prophet that the latter adopted him as his son, and he preferred

a life with the Prophet, preferred to serve him and his Cause to a life of freedom at home among his own people. Many slaves rose to high positions in life, even as emperors and commanders. Freeing of slaves was made a highly moral virtue, the Prophet himself had freed in his life-time countless slaves and invariably after every war he adopted the course of freeing without ransom almost all the captives. His noble example was followed by his followers. That his last words before his death were about,the proper treatment to be meted out to the slaves, only points out how intense and thoroughly sincere was his work of upliftment and reform. He said: "Fear God in the matter of prayer and in the matter of those whom your right hand possesses".

Numerous and significant are the Quranic injunctions about the treatment of slaves, a part and parcel of the religion of Islam, that aimed at an all-round betterment of these people, and not merely granting themf reedom. Many of those who rose to high positions in life would have been nowhere but for the far-seeing and correct attitude of the Prophet towards this gigantic problem. How many millions were saved from a life of utter degradation! Did this not raise life and civilization to a higher stage? The following pertinent quotations from the Quran and other sources may not be out of place. They help to a large extent to give this important topic a complete and comprehensive atmosphere.

> "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the east and the west, but righteousness is this, that one should believe in Allah and the

Last Day, and the angels and the Book and the Prophet, and give away wealth out of love for Him, to the near of kins and the orphans and the needy and the way-farer and the beggars and for (**emancipation of**) **the captives,**" etc. (2:177). "And what will make you comprehend what the uphill road is? It is the **setting free of the slaves** or the giving of food in the day of hunger to an orphan," etc.

"Alms are only for the poor and the needy and the officials appointed over them and those whose hearts are made to incline (to truth) and emancipation of captives and those in debt and in the way of Allah, and the way-farer." (9:60). (Making the freeing of slaves a state duty).

"And to those of your slaves who desire a deed of manumission, execute it for them, if you know good is in them and give them the property which God has given you." (24:33).

"And marry those among you who are single and those who are fit among your male slaves and your female slaves; if they are needy, Allah will make thee free from want, out of His Grace; and Allah is amply giving, knowing.....and do not compel your slave girls to prostitution". (4:3).

The following traditions quoted from Bukhari further clearly show what an entirely different and pretty comfortable life the slaves had after the advent of the Prophet, once degraded beyond imagination. They were raised to a real brotherhood in Islam.

Aristotle downwards, considering it as a necessary and unavoidable evil in the body politic of any society or state. It was a part and parcel of the Greek and Roman civilization. It was considered quite natural and legitimate. Read the following:—

"A freed man of the time of Augustus left as many as 4,116 slaves by his will. The slave trade was carried on extensively everywhere. Under the Roman Empire the master had absolute authority over his slaves, and could even put them to death at his will. The construction of roads, the cleansing of sewers and the maintenance of aqueducts were common employment. Personal chastisement and banishment from the town house to rural occupations were among the lighter punishments. Employment in the mill, relegation to the mines or quarries, men and women in chains, working half-naked under the lash, guarded by soldiers, slaves brought to obedience to their masters by means of systematic terrorism, gladiatorial combats, fight with wild beasts in the amphitheatres, internment in subterranean cell or exposure to the inclemency of the weather while fixed in dirty fishponds, slave maidens shockingly subjected to the brutality of their masters contributing to the impurities at that period and disgracing society—all these were common occurences in Roman life".

That till as late as the eighteenth century the various countries in the West, England, France, Germany, Spain and Holland, had carried on a regular traffic in slaves, necessitated by the colonial system where slave labour was needed, positively proclaims how the Christendom of Christ was deliberately

apathetic regarding this supreme question. "Christianity, in short, did nothing either to abolish or to mitigate the cruelties of slaves". On the other hand, the Church itself held slaves and upheld the unholy institution. What a contrast! Mohammad was the real saviour and redeemer. He was he who really established the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, raising the countless, helpless, wretched souls to a position of equality and brotherhood. The modern world, I mean, this twentieth century world, with its superiority and inferiority complex, has much to learn from the Prophet's prophetic teachings.

Slavery—mental moral, spiritual, intellectual and physical, and darkness all round, had disfigured and blackened the horizon everywhere. The Holy Prophet boldly knocked down everything, heralding the supreme and undisputed suzerainty of the One God over everything. Islamic culture and learning, the new vitality of Islam, stirred Europe from its horror and darkness, and the new light brought life and hope, driving away all darkness and chaos. Arabia became the centre of this wonderful Renaissance.

Arabia had its slight waves of reformation before the Holy Prophet's advent, with Prophets rising here and there to warn people of their impending disaster. Nor was the country free from the proselytising influences of Christianity and Judaism. But all these were only, after all, gentle ripples that were visible hither and thither. Arabia was, on the whole, unaffected by such movements. It was proof against all reformations.

"During the youth of Mohammad, the aspect of peninsula was strongly conservative; perhaps reform

never was at any period more hopeless. Causes are sometimes conjured up to account for results produced by an agent apparently inadequate to effect them. Mohammad arose, and forthwith the Arabs were aroused in a new and spiritual faith. Hence the conclusion that Arabia was fermenting for the change, and prepared to adopt it. To us, calmly reviewing the past, pre-Islamic history belies the assumption. After five centuries of Christian evangelization we can point out to but a sprinkling here and there of Christian Converts".

"In fine, viewed thus in a religious aspect, the surface of Arabia had been now and then gently rippled by the feeble efforts of Christianity; the sterner influence of Judaism had been occasionally visible in the deeper and more troubled current; but the tide of indigenous idolatry and of Ishmaelite superstition, setting strongly from every quarter towards the Kaba, gave ample evidence that the faith and worship of Mecca held the Arab mind in a rigorous and undisputed thraldom".

"The prospects of Arabia before the rise of Mohammad were as unfavourable to religious reform as to political union or national regeneration. The foundation of the Arab faith was a deep-rooted idolatry, which for centuries had stood proof, with a palpable symptom of decay, against every attempt at evangelization from Egypt and Syria."

Such an incorrigible race were brought round within a few years, to the worship of the One God. Is this not a phenomenal success?

CHAPTER IV.

A PEN PORTRAIT OF THE HOLY PROPHET



verbatim rendering of a pen portrait of the Holy Prophet as given by Khwaja Kamal-ud-din in his book, 'The Ideal Prophet', being a translation from Bukhari and other sources, may not be out of place in this work.

"The Prophet's size was neither too long nor too small or dwarfish. When he walked by himself, people said he was short-statured, whereas when he walked with another he seemed taller than him. He would say that the medium height was the best."

His complexion was white without being wheat-coloured or too white—the colour that is pure white is free from every mixture of yellow, red or any other colour.

Some have described him as being ruddy, and for the sake of coincidence have said that the organs exposed to the air and sun, such as the face, the neck and the ears, were reddish, and the parts covered with clothes were pure white. His hair was curly and not ertirely hanging down, and neither too bushy nor shaggy. When he combed them, there was in them a wavy appearance, and they say his hair flowed down to his shoulder, and they often say it reached the lobes of his ears. He sometimes parted them into two locks, one on each side of the ear; sometimes he would comb his hair above his ears so that his neck could be

seen there. In his beard and head there were only seventeen grey hairs, and never more than that. His face was more beautiful than that of others; he who described his face always compared it with the full moon. And because his skin was fair, his anger and cheer could be discerned from his countenance. And the people said of him that he was as described by his friend Abu Bakr in the couplet below:—

As there is no darkness in moonlit night,

So is Mustafa, the well-wisher bright.

The forehead of the Prophet was wide and the eyebrows thin and full, and between the eyebrows there was a silvery lustre. The eyes of the Prophet were large and expanded, deep and dark with a tint of redness; his eyelashes were long and so thick that they looked as if they were about to meet. His nose was proportionately sloping lengthwise, and his teeth were a little interpaced, and when he laughed their brilliancy rivalled that of the lightning. His lips were beautilul and fascinating. His cheeks were not light, but hard. His face was neither elongated nor circular, but roundish. His beard was thick, and he would not get it trimmed, but allowed it to grow, though he had his moustache cropped. The neck of the Prophet was more beautiful than that of others; it was neither long nor short. The part of it exposed to the sun and air looked like an urn of silver besmeared with gold. His breast, free from all malice, was broad; the flesh of none of its parts seemed above that of the others. It was even and transparent and smooth. From the thorax to the navel there was a thin line of the hair,

and there were no hairs besides. Both the shoulders of the Prophet were broad and thickly overgrown with hair; his shoulders, ankles and arm-pits were fleshy; and his back was broad, and near his right shoulder blade was a mark like a seal, and in it there was a black mole, somewhat yellowish, round which there was some thick hair. Both his hands and arms were fleshy, his wrists long and his palms broad, and his hands and feet broad and expanded. His fingers were as if they were Phalanges of silver. His palm was soft like velvet, and full of scent like that of a perfumer. His thighs and calves of the legs were fleshy. His body was moderately stout, though in his old age his flesh was as muscular and sinewy as if he were newly born. His gait was firm; his step steadfast. In walking he leaned forward and put his steps close to each other. He would say that, compared with the others, he was man like Adam, and that in his morals and constitution he resembled his father Abraham.

CHAPTER V.

PROPHECIES ABOUT THE GREAT PROPHET.



here has not been a nation but it had a warner". Prophets were raised in the world from time to time, both before and after Abraham; until the last Prophet Mohammad appeared. God had sent separate Prophets for the reformation of separate nations. It was necessary, because, each nation lived in complete isolation from one another, since the modern means and conveniences of transpor t communication and mutual intercourse were then unknown. But when God thought it necessary to make all religious systems into One, under a single and individual brotherhood, He as promised through the prophecies of the former Prophets, raised the World Prophet, Mohammad. The Quran says: "Surely those who believe and those who are Jews and the Christians and the Sabaens, whoever believeth in Allah and the last day doeth good, they shall have their reward from the Lord and there is no fear for them, neither shall they grieve". Mohammad was raised to proclaim such a universal Gospel of Peace.

As Quran teaches us, the advent of the Holy Prophet was foretold by all the Prophets. " Those who follow the Apostle Prophet the **Ummi** whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospel....." (7:157). In his promise to Abraham, God has clearly said that from among both Israelites and Ishmaelites Prophets will be raised. "And I will

make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing". (Gen. 12:2). In the same book a reference is made to Ishmael: "And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold I have blessed him and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly". (Gen. 17:20).

Moses uttered another prophecy from God regarding the advent of the Prophet, Mohammad. "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth". (Dent: 18:18). In this there are two references that apply only to the Prophet, Mohammad. The first, from among their brethren means that the One Prophet would be raised from among the brethren of Israelites, that is, Ishmaelites. The second reference, like unto thee, means that he would be a law-giver like Moses, and there was no Prophet, except the Prophet, Mohammad, who was a law-giver. This assertion is further borne out by the conversation between John the Baptist, and those who asked him, "Who art Thou?" And he confessed....."I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then?" "Art thou Elias?" And he saith: "I am not." "Art thou that Prophet?" And he answered "No". (John. 1:19-21). The reference to 'that Prophet" clearly shows that the people were waiting for the advent of three Prophets,—first, Elias, whom they thought would re-appear again in person; second, Jesus; and third, that Prophet referred to. 'That Prophet' clearly points to the Holy Prophet of Islam, for, the first two, according to the Israelite scriptures, were fulfilled in the persons of John and Jesus. The Holy Prophet was the only Prophet like unto Moses.

The Holy Quran refers to this thus: "Verily, we have raised a Prophet among you like unto the Prophet that we sent to Pharaoh". (73:15). It also refers to the prophecy in Deut, and says: "A witness from among the Israelites has borne witness of one like him".

The same book Deutoronomy contains another significant prophecy. It says: "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir to them; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came forth with ten thousands of saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them". Sinai and Seir refer to the two places from where Moses and Jesus respectively received the Divine Call. Now the words that "he shined forth from Mount Paran etc., must undoubtedly and unmistakebly refer to Mohammad, Paran being the ancient name for the land of Hedjaz where he was born, and his triumphal entry into Mecca with his ten thousand followers is a well-known historical fact, referred to in the prophecy in the words, "He came forth with ten thousands of saints." The "fiery law" refers to the various moral, social and religious codes that were given to the world by Mohammad, very important in their nature, throwing a flood of light on divers matters affecting the welfare of mankind. And the law is still known as **Baidha** or shining. Here is the law-giver like Moses!

Another Prophecy refers to Arabia itself, as being the land of the Promised Prophet. "The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companions of Dedanites. Unto him that was thirsty they brought water, the inhabitant of

the land of Tirna did meet the fugitives with their bread. For they fled away from the swords, from the drawn sword and from the bent bow and from the grievous war". (Isaiah 21:13-15).

Here is a clear and clean reference to the historic flight of the Prophet with his friend, Abu Bakr. He had to flee for his life, himself and his friend, hiding themselves in a cave for safety for three days, friends from Mecca secretly sending them food during these three days. It is also a known fact how his house was surrounded by enemies, truly and literally with drawn swords, ready to fall upon him the moment he came out. This prophecy, containing such accurate historical facts, is another conclusive testimony to point out that the Promised Prophet was Mohammad.

There are many other prophecies by Israelite Prophets, such as David, Solomon, Habakkub, Haggai, and others, as well as by Jesus, the last of the Israelites, who says thus:—

"If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray to the father and He shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth." (John 14:15-17).

"But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." (John 14;26).

"Nevertheless, I tell you the Truth, it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you". (John 16:17).

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit ot Truth, is come, he will guide you unto all Truth." (John 16:12-13).

These verses from the New Testament predict in clear terms the advent of another Prophet after Jesus, and the words; 'that he may abide with you for ever' indicate that there would be no other Prophet after the promised one. This is only true of the Holy Prophet, Mohammad, for, in the Quran he is spoken of as "The last of the Prophets." (33-40). Again, the prophecy, "he shall teach you all things," is echoed and corroborated in the Quran thus: "This day I have made perfect for you your religion." (5:3). And in the prophecy the Promised One is called the Spirit of Truth, and the Quran also confirms the same when it says, "Say, the Truth has come and falsehood has vanished." (17:81).

Thus, as the Quran points out, all the Prophets had foretold the advent of the Holy Prophet, Mohammad. In order that people may not be mistaken, it is said that the Promised One would bear testimony to the Truth of all the Prophets, as the following verse of Quran shows: "And who believe in that which has been revealed to you, and that which was revealed before you, and they are sure of the hereafter." (II:4). "Say: We believe in Allah and (in) that which has been revealed to us and (in) that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and (in) that which was given to the Prophets from their Lord; and we do not

make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit." (ii:136).

All these prophecies of Moses, Jesus and others, about the advent of the Promised Prophet, were amply and thoroughly fulfilled in the person of Mohammad, the greatest and last of the Prophets. The joint prayer of Abraham and Ishmael at the Kaba also found its due fulfilment. "Our Lord! and raise up a Prophet from among themselves, who should recite, Thy verses to them, teach them the Book and wisdom, and also purify them." (2:129). So, it was. Peace and blessings of Allah be on him.

"Mohammad set a shining example to his people. His character was pure and stainless. His dress, his food, they were characterized by a rare simplicity. So unpretentious was he that he would receive from his companions no special mark of reverence, nor would he accept any service from his slave which he could do himself".

—DR. GUSTAVE WEIL

"He was one of those happy few who have attained the supreme joy of making one great truth their life-spring. He was the messenger of the one God; and never to his life's end did he forget who he was, or the message which was the marrow of his being."

—MR. POOLE

CHAPTER VI.

DESCENT, BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD.

ISHMAEL, the eldest son of Abraham, had twelve sons; one of them, Kaidar, settled in the Arabian province of Hedjaz, where his progeny spread. This is borne out even on the authority of the Old Testament. It is also now proved that Adnan, to whom the genealogy of the Prophet has been traced, was the progeny of Ishmael. In the ninth generation of Adnan, is Nazir bin Kinana, who founded the dynasty of the Quraish; and further down in the ninth place comes the Qusayy, who was entrusted with the guardianship of the Kaba—an office of high honour in Arabia. He was the grand-father of the Holy Prophet's grand-father, Abdul Muttalib. Thus, the dynasty, to which the Prophet belonged, was one of the highest in honour, respect and nobility.

Abdul Muttalib, the grand-father of the Prophet referred to above, had ten sons; one was Abdullah, the Prophet's father. Among the other sons, Abu Lahab was the arch-enemy of the Prophet from the very beginning. Abu Talib was his affectionate uncle and guardian, who brought him up as he was an orphan. Hamza was one of the earliest converts to Islam; he fell at the battle of Ohud. Abbas was affectionately disposed towards the Prophet, though he remained outside the pale of Islam for a long time.

Abdullah married Amina, daughter of Wahab-bin-Abd-i-Manaf, a lady of another respectable family.

"The pair stood eminent, not only in respect of the nobility of their families, but for what counted more in that age of darkness and corruption, they were both possessed of a pure nature." The Holy Prophet never knew or saw his father, for, shortly after his parents were married, his father went on a commercial journey to Syria, and on his way back he fell seriously ill and died at Medina. Born a posthumous child, he unfortunately lost his mother also when he was only six years old. So, he was deprived of the kind and loving care of both parents. This unlettered orphan was destined to leave behind, "a rich heritage of profound wisdom".

The Holy Prophet was born on Monday, the 12th of Rabi-ul-Awwal, in the year 571 A.D. Another date suggested is the 9th of the same month, corresponding to the 20th of April 571 A. D. In a vision his mother received the happy news that she was to give birth to a Prophet. When he was born there were the usual signs to indicate a Prophet's birth. There was an abundant rainfall, with the consequent disappearance of famine. Another extraordinary event that took place at the time of his birth was the destruction of the army of Christians, led by the chief of Yemen, Abraha, who had marched to Mecca to demolish the Kaba, so that the magnificent church he had built at his capital, Sana, may become the resort of people, temporal and spiritual, instead of the Kaba. "This was, in fact, a life and death struggle between Trinity and Unity." The whole army encamped just outside Mecca was attacked by a most virulent form of small-pox, which caused great havoc and destroyed the major part of the army. The rest took to flight in

utter confusion. Allah himself thus took care of His House according to the prayer of Abdul Muttalib, the Quraish having taken shelter in the neighbouring hills. "O Allah ! This is Thy own house. We feel too feeble to defend it. Be pleased to take care of it Thyself." The Holy Quran gives a picture of the destruction of the army thus: "Hast thou not considered how thy Lord dealt with the possessors of the elephant? Did He not cause their war to end in confusion, and sent down birds in flocks to prey upon them, casting them against hard stones, so He rendered them like straw eaten up?"

According to the custom of the Arab gentry, mothers did not suckle their babies. So, the Prophet was handed over to Halima, a nurse of the tribe of Banu Sad. Two years later, Halima brought him back to his mother, but Amina asked her to take him back again, as Mecca at that time was stricken with an epidemic. Thus he remained under the charge and care of Halima until the age of six. Although only a child, those few years, spent in rural sorroundings, did much to mould his character. The calm atmosphere and natural surroundings, made him realise the existence of a Supreme Being who rules over and controls all. So, at the age of six, when he returned to his mother, he was well on the road to Prophethood. Unfortunately, he was not destined to have the love and care of his mother for long, for soon after, she died on her way to Medina, where she was going to pay a visit to the tomb of her husband.

Mohammad then was taken care of by his grand-father, Abdul Muttalib, who died before two

years had elapsed. At the age of eight his guardianship passed to his uncle, Abu Talib. The uncle and nephew soon became so attached to each other, that it became impossible for the former to go anywhere, even on a commercial journey, without his nephew. People were greatly impressed by his ways and manners. Once, during such a journey, they met a Christian ascetic, named Bahira, who beholding the boy, saw the marks of greatness in him, and foretold that one day he (Mohammad) would be the recipient of Prophethood. This incident, it is needless to say, raised the nephew higher in the estimation of his uncle, drawing him closer within the affectionate bonds of the latter. The nephew too was deeply attached towards his guardian uncle.

The Christian ascetic's foretelling makes us pause awhile. There must be something peculiarly striking in the very appearance of the child, Mohammad. In him the Bahira could see the future great Prophet. And from his childhood itself, one can understand how the future Prophet was evolved out of a series of struggles against overwhelming adverse circumstances. He was an orphan, devoid of the loving care o parents, and an orphan is likely to be spoilt, either through indifference or through too much of fondling. He was fortunate enough, though left an orphan, in having an uncle, who looked after him more carefully than his son, but all the uncle's care and affection was thoroughly justified by the exemplary character and conduct of the nephew. The orphan was not a spoilt child. On the other hand, even as a child, he bore himself with becoming dignity and seriousness, and had excellent table manners, always waiting for his

food till he was called. Even as a child, he thus rose above circumstances. There was something extra-ordinary in him. This unlettered orphan became afterwards the repository of the highest wisdom. Though himself untaught, he became the greatest Teacher of mankind. Bahira foretold nothing but the Truth.

"Most successful of all prophets and religious personalities".
—ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA

"Indeed, I venture to state in all humility, that if self-sacrifice, honesty of purpose, unswerving belief in one's mission, a marvellous insight into existing wrong or error, and the perception and use of the best means of its removal, are among the outward and visible signs of inspiration, the mission of Mohammad was "inspired".
—DR. LEITNER

"There is a common ground between Mohammadanism and Christianity, and he is a better Christian who reveres the truths enunciated by the Prophet Mohammad."
—IBID

CHAPTER VII.

BEFORE THE CALL.

E have seen how Mohammad, an orphan child, had the rare fortune to have an uncle who brought him up as his own son, who looked upon him as more than a son, and who had the deepest affection towards him. And we have seen also how the nephew thoroughly justified such a treatment. Amidst all this careful upbringing of an affectionate uncle, one striking feature may be noted. Mohammad was not given any education, either by Abu Talib, his uncle, or by his other guardians. This was no fault of theirs; they were not to be blamed for the same. For, it was not the custom among the people in those days to educate their children, especially among the upper class. The Quraish regarded reading and writing, a task for menials. How could Arabia that was dark all round think of education at all? It was therefore a wonder to the world, to realise later the great depth of learning, scholarship, and philosophy that Mohammad had attained. "He was illiterate, unable to read or write, born in a benighted country, among wild and ignorant people. But God the Great adorned him with the best of noble qualities, the highest morals and the most exalted habits."

According to the custom of the day, Mohammad learnt business, and visited all places with which Arabs had business relations. Even at an early age, his integrity and truthfulness won him fame in Mecca

and soon earned him the title of "Al-Amin", the Trustworthy. Anyone who had dealings with him in any connection, always spoke of him with praise and respect. Even his worst enemies, who accused him of many things in his later life of Prophethood, could not say a word against his honesty and integrity. It is said that once the sacred House of Kaba was to be reconstructed. The Quraish undertook the reconstruction business; but soon a dispute arose as to who was to be given the privilege of laying the 'Black Stone'. This might have landed them in unnecessary inter-tribal feuds and the consequent destruction of many families, when an old man advised them to refer the whole matter to an arbitrator. He suggested that the disputed point should be decided by one who happened to appear first at the Kaba the next day. The wise suggestion was readily accepted. And to the entire satisfaction of all, Mohammad, the Trustworthy, was the first to appear at the Kaba, and all acclaimed him in one voice saying: "Here is Al-Amin! Here is Al-Amin". He placed the stone on a sheet of cloth and then invited the headmen of all clans to hold the sheet by the four ends for placing the stone in the proper place. Thus all had their share of honour, the whole dispute being so satisfactorily settled by his tact and understanding.

At the age of twenty, the prophet took part in the battle of Fijar (transgression) so called because it was fought during the sacred months when warfare was not allowed. It was a battle between the Quraish and the Qais. He did not take an active part in the struggle and he kept clear of any bloodshed, only doing the work of supplying arrows and other fighting

materials to his uncles. Even as a youth, he abhorred bloodshed and warfare, though to the whole people of Arabia wars and feuds were parts of their pastimes. It is a well-known fact how in his later life he was forced, by sheer unavoidable circumstances, to enter into wars. All his wars were purely defensive ones. He was a lover of peace from the very beginning.

His participation in the alliance called the "Hilf-ul-Fazool", formed to defend the cause of the weak against all sorts of oppressions and tyranny, brings out another important trait in his character. He was full of that human sympathy, the best friend and saviour of the poor, the weak, the orphans and the slaves. In fact, the Quran is replete with advices and instructions regarding the duty of society towards such helpless beings. They are almost the essence of Islam.

As a youth, Mohammad possessed a stainless, unimpeachable character, not an insignificant factor. For, youth is mad and youth is blind, "A hot temper leaps over a cold decree". The intoxication of youth makes one throw the bindings of religion and morality cleanly overboard, and he is tempted to taste the sweet, though forbidden fruits. Leave alone the layman; there are many among the most learned and holy who bow to the luring call of youth and who stray away from the right path and from the observance of the rules of morality. When youth has gone, when its maddening effects have come to an ebb, when old age with all its weakness and troubles appears, then, perhaps, some do wake up to realise the reality of their past unreality, of their dreams of madness. A

sort of death-bed repentence follows. They become dwellers of either mosques or monasteries, chanting hymns and counting beads, and thus trying to erase the malignant effects of the black chapters of their past lives. In strong and sharp contrast to these are those who are **blessed** with an unimpeachable and stainless life. The word **Blessed** is advisedly and significantly used here, for, when everything is said, God's blessing alone can direct one through the right and righteous path, free of all the follies and temptations of youth. These are the really chosen ones, the real heroes of the world. Mohammad, the Prophet, is decidedly one such.

A just man bows his head in reverence when he studies the youth of the Holy Prophet. His youth was perfect, unimpeachable, and stainless. It is almost impossible to find the like of him in the annals of the world's history. That such a spotless character should arise in an age and in a place, devoid of the least tinge of morality, is in itself one of the wonders in human evolution. Thousand four hundred years ago, during the youth of Mohammad, ignorance, immorality, and crime were rampant throughout Arabia. Morality was something of risk to them. Adultery and prostitution was the fashion of the day. Rape, kidnapping and enticing of women were common occurences. Wine was the ordinary drink. In fact, wine, women, wars and songs, would aptly sum up their life. They were proud of their sins and would boast of them. They led the most immoral and shameful lives. In such abominable surroundings and among such vicious and wicked people, to keep one's youth pure and intact, is a wonderful

achievement. All facts of his life are clear and open to the world. His whole life is an open book to all—not marred by any mystery, mysticism, or ambiguity. There is not one, even his greatest enemy, who can say that the youth of Mohammad was not good and pure. He kept himself aloof from all undesirable people and functions. He had very few friends as he was of a reserved and contemplative nature; but the few he had, later followed his teachings and became Muslims, which fact undoubtedly proves that the youth of the Prophet was perfect and stainless. While others spent their youth in sins and crimes, Mohammad was successfully and heroically struggling against these, trying to find out ways and means to save Arabia from its pitiable state.

Khadija, a rich widow, was one of those, who could not but be impressed by such a unique personality. Mohammad was then twenty-five. She entrusted to him the management of her business, and he was so honest in all his dealings that she volunteered herself to marry him, though there were many others only too willing to marry her, because she was a rich widow of a noble family. He did not give her an answer, but first he went to his uncle, Abu Talib, and got his consent. Though Khadija was senior to him by fifteen years, the union was a very happy one. Like the Prophet, she too possessed very high moral virtues. She willingly sacrificed her whole life, wealh and comfort in his Cause, placing herself, body and soul at his entire disposal. She could understand that he was destined for something great, and she, therefore, completely identified herself with his ideals and aspirations. She was an unfailing

source of solace and comfort to him in all his distress and mental struggles and he was devoted to her for all her moral virtues. Even after her death, he often remembered her in affectionate terms. When Ayesha asked him whether God had not given him in her person a better substitute for Khadija, the Prophet answering her in the negative said: "She accepted me at a time when every one else had rejected me".

From this happy Union, the Prophet had four daughters and two sons. The eldest of all names Qasim died very young, while only two years old. His eldest daughter was named Zainab who was married to Abdul-As. Usman married the next daughter, Ruqayya, and afterwards her sister, Umme Kulsum, when Ruqayya died. (It was on the day of the Muslims' Victory at the Battle of Badr that Ruqayya died.) Fatima, the youngest of the daughters, was married to Ali, the son of Abu Talib and the staunchest follower of the Prophet. From her sprang the progeny called the Sayyids. The youngest of the children was a male child who died also very young.

Such was his life as a youth before the Divine Call came to him. It may be termed the preparatory period in his life. The high level of his character, as seen in this period, unmistakably pointed out to the higher life, the more serious life, that was ahead of him. With Khadija's marriage began a new phase in his life. It was truly a spiritual union. She was destined to play an important part in his serious mission in life. The stainless, serious, contemplative youth, full of that human sympathy, glittering resplendent with moral virtues and sterling worth,

amidst a sickening atmosphere of gross immorality and undiluted impurity, just entering upon a period of trials, ordeals, and persecutions, is an excellent ideal to all, to the youth of any country, a perennial fountain of unfailing inspiration. It is high time for the young Muslims of to-day to realise that they are the fortunate followers of such an ideal Prophet and personality whose youth was remarkably pure and unimpeachable, humbly endeavouring for ever to follow in his foot-steps. In them lie the greater future of Islam and the greater future of their country. So, let them be up and doing.

A beautiful and succinct summary of the Meccan life of the Prophet, as given by Syed Ameer Ali in his book, "The Spirit of Islam", will surely serve as a finishing paragraph to this chapter.—

> "We have seen this wonderful man as an orphan child who had never known a father's love, bereft in infancy of a mother's his early life so full of pathos, growing up from a thoughtful child to a still more thoughtful youth. His youth as pure and true as his boyhood; his manhood as austere and devout as his youth. His ear ever open to the sorrows and sufferings of the weak and the poor; his heart ever full of sympathy and tenderness towards all God's creatures. He walks so humbly and so purely, that men turn round and point, 'There goes Al-Amin, the true, the upright, the trusty. A faithful friend, a devoted husband; a thinker intent on the mysteries of life and death, on the responsibilities of human

actions, and end and aim of human existence—he sets himself to the task of reclaiming and reforming a nation, nay, a world, with only one loving heart to comfort and solace him. Baffled, he never falters; beaten, he never despairs. He struggles on with the indomitable spirit to achieve the work assigned to him".

"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of assembly, saying Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, they have well said that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

—DEUTE XVIII, 15–18

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DIVINE CALL.

THE ideal, contemplative youth was slowly drifting towards the higher and the more serious stage in his life. He was daily growing restless, becoming more and more reserved and keeping aloof from the sinful society around. He spent most of his time in divine contemplation and deep meditation, trying to fathom the unfathomable, to unravel the might mysteries behind this vast universe. His visits to the cave of Hira became more frequent, and there he would sit sometimes for days together, completely lost and immersed in solemn contemplation. He had occasional features of visions, heralding the divine revelation. He was to hear soon the Divine Voice, the divine answer and solution to all his mental struggles and agonising enquiries.

One night during the month of Ramadan, (609th year of the Christian era) an angel appeared before him and gave him something to read. Mohammad said: "I do not know how to read". Then the angel embraced him and again asked him to read. Three times the request was repeated, and each time Mohammad could only plead utter inability to do so saying: "I do not know how to read". The Angel then read out the verses and assured Mohammad, that although he was unable to read, if he attempted in the name of God, he would succeed. At this time he was also made aware that he was the chosen one for the

regeneration of mankind. The verses referred to are the following:—

> "Read in the name of thy Lord who created. He created man from a clot. Read, and thy Lord is most honourable, Who taught (to write) with the pen, taught man what he knew not". (The Holy Quran, XCVI, 1-5).

These verses also contain an allusion to the vast amount of knowledge and wisdom that was to be revealed to the world through the Prophet. He was all the while yearning for that Divine Light that would dispel all darkness. It came to him. He was to reform the whole of mankind, "to raise man to the height of mental, moral and spiritual culture". This was a very great responsibility, but Mohammad did not fear or lose heart: When God commanded Moses to refom one nation, he was not able to do so himself, and in despair cried to God, "Give me a helper". But the Holy Prophet, Mohammad, did not despair, nor did he ask for a helper; he relied only on the help of God to carry out his great and arduous task.

The following longer quotation from the Great Book of God amplifies the verses quoted, showing how it "taught man what he knew not", showing how the Prophet brought wisdom and knowledge to the whole world, wonderfully anticipating modern science. It says thus:—

> "And certainly We made above you seven ways; and never are We heedless of creation. And We send down water from the cloud

according to a measure, We cause it to settle in the earth, and most surely We are able to carry it away. Then We cause to grow thereby gardens of palm-trees and grapes for you; you have in them many fruits and from them do you eat. And a tree that grows out of Mount Sinai which produces oil and a condiment for those who eat.....And certainly We created man of an extract of clay. Then We made him a small life-germ in a firm resting place. Then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made in the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation, so blessed be Allah, the best of the Creators. Then after that you will most surely die. Then surely on the Day of Resurrection you shall be raised.....Successful indeed are the believers who are humble in their prayers, and who keep away from what is vain, and who act aiming at purification".

"And who are content. Except before their mates or those whom their right hand possess, for they surely are not blameable, but whoever seeks to go beyond that, these are they that exceed the limits; and those who are keepers of their trusts and their covenant, and those who keep a guard on their prayers; these are they who are the heirs, who shall inherit the Paradise; they shall abide therein".

No ordinary human being can ever experience the strange phenomenon of Divine inspiration; during

this experience the whole body is possessed by Divine Power. When the Holy Prophet first experienced Divine Inspiration, he perspired profusely, his whole body bacame heavy, his limbs turned icy cold, and he was in a tremor from head to foot. Shivering and shaking he went home, and his wife Khadija wrapped him up. When he narrated to her about his strange experience, she encouraged him by assuring that God would not desert him and his noble mission, pointing out to him many of his virtuous acts. She said: "God will never let you see the humiliation of failure. Verily you show due regard to blood-ties, carry the burden of the infirm, practise virtues that are absolutely extinct, entertain guests and stand by what is righteous in the face of calamities". Mohammad received similar Divine Inspirations many times, and each time the inspiration was accompanied with the same feelings, that of profuse perspiration, and heaviness of the whole body.

After the first appearance of the angel in the Cave of Hira, when it was made known to Mohammad that he was to be the World Reformer, the angel Gabriel did not visit him for a short period. This period during which there was a cessation of revelation is known as Fatrut-ul-Wahy. Some say it was a period of two or three years; but the version of Ibn-i-Abbas who states it was only a short period of about six months, is more to be relied on, according to historical evidence, brushing away all other divergent and conflicting opinions. To the Prophet, even this short period of incessant restlessness and extreme agony must have naturally seemed a prolonged one, separated still as he was from the Divine Light of his

Beloved One. It was only in this sense that the period was a long one. It was perhaps a wise Providential arrangement, for frequent repititions of revelations would have surely and seriously told upon the physical health of the struggling soul who was already showing signs of extreme weakness. After this period of six months, the final grand revelation did come to him, and then also he experienced the same symptoms and feelings, though not with the same intensity. This time also he wanted Khadija to wrap him up. But the time had already arrived for him to awake and arise, to preach his universal gospel for humanity. "O thou hast wrapped thyself up! Be up and warn". (94:1-2). He now entered the next stage in his life. The mantle of Prophethood, with all its crushing and trying responsibilities, had already fallen on him.

There can be no truth in the statement that the Prophet during the cessation period would go to the tops of mountains to hurl himself down head-long. It might be that he was naturally restless during this trying period, but to suggest the idea that he went to the desperate extremity of trying to commit suicide, is not warranted by the predominant optimistic spirit in his life. He never despaired of himself or of his noble cause. He had always exhibited throughout his life that unflinching faith in God in the most trying circumstances, is the prime cause for his grand success. He was yearning to reform humanity, and he was entrusted with the self-same task that was dearest and nearest to his heart. He was, no doubt, in a perplexed state of mind, going to mountains for further contemplations, to soothe his disturbed mind,

and to receive further Light, and not to commit suicide. "Divine Light, after which he had been so eagerly groping, disappeared no sooner than it had flashed upon his mind. This made him all the more restless. All the more did his heart long to hear the sweet Divine words once again. It was thus in search of what was so dear to his heart that he would go out to mountains. It was done with no idea of suicide. Every incident of his subsequent life belies the conjecture. In the face of the most disappointing circumstances, his faith in Divine help never wavered for one moment, nor did he ever yield by an hair's-breadth, to the most overwhelming difficulties".

(1) "Paradise lieth at the feet of the mother".

(2) "God is not merciful to him who is not so to mankind".

(3) "He is not of us who is not affectionate to his little ones, and doth not revere the old".

(4) "Actions shall be judged according to motives".

(5) "The best of man is he from whom good accrueth to humanity".

—MOHAMMAD

CHAPTER IX.

THE EARLY CONVERTS.

AMONG the foremost of those who greatly helped the Prophet to place on a firm and auspicious footing his infant Faith, the name of Khadija naturally comes uppermost. She was almost the very first soul who believed in him and his sacred cause, soothing his troubled and disturbed mind with timely encouraging words. How he prized her as an invaluable asset to his Cause is known from what he himself said about her to Ayesha. He said: "She accepted me at a time when every one else had rejected me". She had not the least doubt about his genuine claim for Prophethood, and she dispelled all his doubts and perplexities by rightly and justly observing that a man of his stamp, "of lofty character and broad sympathies, could not possibly come to grief". She was certainly thus the first and the most earnest believer in the Prophet's mission. She was from the very beginning deeply impressed by his sterling worth, so much so that she voluntarily offered herself in marriage to him, and as a wife, coming to possess more and more, close and intimate knowledge about the workings of the innermost recesses of his heart, she found that her high estimate about him was only too well justified to a tenfold and even hundredfold degree. She could, therefore, give him that right direction to his life and mission, standing by him as the foremost believer.

Next in the rank ot believers came the aged and blind cousin of Khadija, named Waraqa-bin-Naufal, who had, weary of idolatry, embraced Christianity. Though he passed away during the cessation period itself, before his death, in an interview with the Prophet arranged by Khadija, he bore testimony to the fact that the latter was beyond doubt, the Promised Prophet. This spontaneous declaration entitled him to a foremost place among the believers, though he did not live long enough to embrace the faith. Hearing about the inspiration that Mohammad had received, he exclaimed thus: "This is the very Angel that God sent down to Moses". He foretold, the Prophet's exile saying: "Would that I might be alive when you are exiled by your people".

The next place must be given to Abu Bakr, the foremost among male believers. He was much respected by all the Quraish and wielded considerable influence in Mecca. He was elder to the Prophet and was on intimate terms with him long before he assumed Prophethood. Like Khadija, he had that implicit confidence in him, and like her he never doubted his righteousness. In fact, he became a convert to the New Faith by simply hearing about it from others, for, he was absent from Mecca while the Prophet proclaimed his mission. Returning from his travel, he met some one on the outskirts of the town who informed him that his (Abu Bakr's) friend, Mohammad, had gone mad, and that he preached against idols, upholding the worship of the One God. "If he says so, he must be right, because I have never known him speak an untruth", was Abu Bakr's characteristically confident reply. And he

accompanied the Prophet in his flight from Mecca to Medina.

Then came Ali, the Prophet's cousin, the youngest, but the staunchest of the early converts to Islam. Both were brought up together under the loving care of Abu Talib, Ali's father, and the cousin had thus an intimate knowledge about the Prophet's character. He was only a mere lad of thirteen or fourteen when Mohammad proclaimed his sacred mission. While all others were only jeering at the announcement, this mere lad, shaking with that sincere spiritual emotion and with tears in his eyes, had the rare courage to stand by the cause saying, "I am the youngest among them all and also the weakest, but I will stand by you". He thoroughly justified his juvenile boldness, became the standard bearer of Islam and was always foremost in the very thick of the fight, foremost in all the battles he gave himself up body and soul for the sacred cause. It was he, who lay in the Prophet's bed, ready to face all dangers, while the latter entrusting him with his various affairs, fled to Medina, accompanied by Abu Bakr. He faced the assassins with extraordinary courage and coolness. He was the Prophet's right hand. There was not a worthier soldier of Islam.

Zaid-bin-Haris, though only a slave, ranks most in importance among the early believers, the foremost among the slave converts. He was so much attracted and impressed by the ideal personality and character of the Prophet that he preferred a life-long service under him to a life of freedom and independence among his own kith and kin. He told his father and

uncle, when they had been to the Prophet to secure his freedom, thus: "Yes father, I prefer to live, even though it were as his slave, with this man, in whom I see that which I do not see anywhere else in the world". And he did live with the Prophet throughout, and had the rare fortune of holding the office of calling the faithful to prayer.

In fact, two-thirds of the early followers of Islam were slaves, were poor people, and it was through these poor and common people that Islam was built up, through the untold sufferings and heartless persecutions that they experienced at the hands of their cruel masters, Bilal, Amir, Lubaina, Zunnira, Nahdiya and Umm-i-Ubais. Slaves liberated by Abu Bakr from their hard-hearted masters, had contributed not a little in those early days to the greatness and glorification of Islam, never yielding a bit in their beliefs, even though they were baked and burnt in the hot sand and even though their chests and limbs were broken by heartless persecutions. These common people became also the torch-bearers of Islamic culture and civilisation in those days of utter darkness and chaos. All these facts only too clearly point out how unfailing and strong was the divine help behind this righteous struggle against wickedness and ignorance and how God justified the holy cause through such means. They readily and willingly poured out their life-blood to build up the infant faith.

Khadija, Abu Bakr, Ali and Zaid, were truly the pillars of early Islam. They were the closest associates of the Prophet from the very beginning and had this very intimate knowledge about the innermost aspects

of his life. They never doubted his sincerity and truthfulness, never doubted the genuineness of his claim to Prophethood. On the other hand, they were more and more attracted towards him, and they bore ample testimony to the divine character of his revelations. If he had been only a liar, hypocrite or imposter, these would have been the very first persons to divulge such weakness in him, surely spurning aside all his claims for Prophethood. Even critics like Muir and Spenger do not question the sincerity of the Prophet's claim.

Within a period of three years, the infant faith secured as many as forty converts. It was a steady and gradual growth. Abu Bakr's missionary zeal brought many new followers. Through his earnest work, men of prominent position who made a mark afterwards in the world of Islamic history, men like Osman, Zubair, Abdur Rahman, Saad and Talha, became converts to Islam. During this early period, men of humbler status too, like Bilal, Yasir, his wife Summayya and his son Ammar, contributed their mite in the sacred cause. We have already noted how the slaves formed the bulk of the early converts and how they, through their marvellous sufferings, built up a strong and unshakeable foundation for Islam. Abdullah-bin-Masud, Khabbab and Arqam also joined the rank. It was in Arqam's house that the Prophet carried on his missionary activities as the Mecca's molestations began to increase.

The strength of Muslims continued to grow, the conversion of some prominent men from among the Quraish gave added strength and further impetus. One of them was Hamza, the Prophet's uncle, a man

of martial spirit and of high moral quality, who was in the high esteem and regard of his compatriots. He was already deeply attached to his nephew and had a high regard for his character and work. His conversion was brought about by the graphic narration of an incident by his servant-maid, coloured with her taunting remarks as to how his nephew was persecuted by Abu Jahal. Straight-away he went to the Kaba where Abu Jahal and his party were holding a meeting to concert measures regarding a determined campaign against the Prophet and his faith. There he publicly announced his conversion to Islam, spurning indignantly the defiant and proud attitude of Abu Jahal.

Omar was the bitterest opponent of the Prophet and his religion, and so bitter were his feelings against this new movement, that he wanted to kill the Prophet himself who was at the bottom of the whole trouble. So, one day, with sword in hand, he was winding his way towards the Prophet's house, when he was met, on the way, by a Muslim who scenting mischief enquired of him as to where he was going and what he was going to do. "To kill Mohammad", was the other's definite and decided reply. But he was surprised to learn from the Muslim that his own sister, Fatima, and her husband, Said, had themselves become converts, and so he was pertinently advised to set his own house in order before attempting to kill Mohammad. Omar was naturally put out to hear about the apostary of his own people. So, he first straight-away went to the house where Fatima and her husband were residing. There Khabbab was reading to them the Quran. The enraged Omar began to

belabour Said first and then afterwards Fatima, also. Both of them received injuries at his wrathful hands. This was too much. His sister gave him the following defiant and bold reply: "Do what you will, we have professed Islam". This unexpected reply had the unexpected effect. The brother's wrath was considerably cooled down, and he even wanted to see the sheets of the Quran, solemnly promising them not to wound their religious susceptibilities. Such Quranic injunctions and truths as the following straight went to his heart. Says the Quran: "O man! We have not revealed the Quran to you that you may be unsuccessful. Nay, it is a reminder to him who fears. A revelation from Him Who created the earth and the high heavens". (20:1). At this psychological moment, Khabbab preached to him about the beauties of Islam. "The mighty Omar fell victim to the spiritual force of Islam". He then went to the house of Arqam not to kill the Prophet, not to attack him and his religion, but to embrace the new religion. So, he who went to scoff remained to pray. No sooner had the Prophet addressed him with a few words than he proclaimed his conversion in the following words: "O Apostle of Allah! I declare faith in Allah and His Prophet". It was no small joy to the small adherants there to learn that one of their bitterest enemies had, after all, joined the rank and file of their organization, which added considerable strength to their cause. All shouted: "Allah-O-Akbar", God is great. The very hills around resounded with the jubilant cry.

Omar's conversion was really a turning-point in the onward progress of Islam. It meant a tower of

strength behind the cause, and such support was the very thing needed. Men like Hamza and Omar were really great towers of strength to the small group of Muslims. Before the conversion of Omar, these Muslims were having their meetings and prayers in privacy, within the house of Arqam being the chief place of resort. Other big family people followed Omar and the Muslim brotherhood took the bold step of having their prayers in public, in the Kaba itself. As we have pointed out, many humbler people also readily came into the fold. It was they who bore the whole weight of the movement, with all the sufferings and calamities of persecutions. Mohammad and his faithful followers now entered in the second stage of the great drama, the period of persecution, which resulted in the Prophet's flight from the city of persecution, Mecca, to the city of refuge, Medina. The great ordeal thus began.

The humblest has a place in the great brotherhood of Islam. It was Islam that showed the way to the humblest and the lowliest, that raised them to the highest pinnacle of glory. It was thus that Islam built up true liberty, equality and fraternity. It was only in the fitness of things that such a wonderful brotherhood was reared up mainly by the poor and the humble. There is a pertinent incident regarding this aspect of early Islam. Once the Prophet was addressing some of the Quraish nobility when he was interrupted in the middle by a blind man. The Prophet went on with his speech without heeding for the blind man. Then came the Divine revelation and admonition to him as stated in the following words of

the Quran: "His forehead knitted and he turned away his face when the blind man came to him". (20:1-2).

The Prophet was rightly advised not to heed so much for the rich and for the nobility, pointing out how the poor, with the Divine help, could do more for the cause than the so-called big people. The poor, blind man would have been benefitted by his preachings. That the Prophet did not care to answer him was a great mistake on his part. So, he was warned and admonished, and he did not conceal even this fact of Divine disapproval. The blind man incident confirms how the whole movement from the very beginning was guided by Divine help.

Who is a true Muslim ?

"Strong (firm) in faith, wise but kind, true in belief, knowing and forbearing, mindful in ease, considerate in rights, temperate in wealth and contended in poverty, gentle in (using) power, regardful in friendship and patient in misery. Neither anger can vanquish him nor excitement can baffle him. Selfishness impels him not—abundance of wealth disgraces him not—and he becomes not mean for desire or greed. Always brave and steady he will run to rescue the oppressed and will be kind to the feeble. He is neither niggardly nor extravagant—forgives the faults and overlooks what the ignorant do—his own self suffers pain at his hands, but to the world he affords pleasure".

—HASAN, THE GRANDSON OF THE PROPHET MOHAMMAD.

CHAPTER X.

PERSECUTION—THE FIRST PHASE.

THUS began in its humblest way in the humble abode of Arqam the new religion which had already established itself in a pretty decent position within a period of three years, drawing within its fold such prominent men from the Quraish as Hamza and Omar. Soon after, a wealthy merchant belonging to an important family of Taym-ibni-Murra, also embraced Islam. He was a man of clear judgment, was a great favourite among the people, and was energetic, honest and amiable. After his conversion, five others belonging to important families followed in his footsteps. The steadily growing influence of the Prophet's mission among some of the important members of the Quraish themselves was not something to be treated slightly. The Meccans had already begun to scent danger from this new activity. Their time-honoured gods and religious practices were threatened to be dislodged. The worship of the One God was preached by Mohammad and his followers, and people's hearts were strongly being drawn towards this new religion. A strong opposition, ruthless and heartless persecution, naturally followed. Islam had to face a period of severe ordeal.

Moreover, the infant faith confined so far within the four walls of the house of Arqam, began to assume courage to come out to the public view. And the Prophet was ordained to come out and preach his religion. "O you who are clothed! Arise and warn,

and magnify your Lord, and purify your garments, and shun uncleanness". The Prophet began to carry on his daily prayers in the Kaba itself, and he began also his public preaching. He had good chances to spread his religion beyond the limits of Mecca. For people from all parts of Arabia used to flock there for business, and huge crowds used to gather there for pilgrimages. To these people, he spoke about his mission. The Quraish tried to put a stop to this. When people from outside arrived in the city, they would post themselves at different places, and tell the strangers not to have anything to do with Mohammad whom they painted as a Magician and madman. Despite their efforts, the whole of Arabia came to know of the wonderful man who risked his very life in telling the people to give up the worship of their forefather's, exhorting them to accept instead the worship of the One God. How could the Quraish let go unchallenged this open defiance of their ancestral worship? Their pride and position was much wounded, and their influence was much undermined. What would be their faith and the fate of their greatest temple that used to receive rich offerings from all parts of Arabia if Mohammad were to succeed in his mission. Further, the Quraish thought that the new religion with its high morals would be a sure bar to their easy luxurious and dissipated life. They were bent upon to uphold at any cost their old prestige and pride, and religion. They devised, therefore, diverse measures of varying severity to check the new menace. The period of opposition, oppression, suppression and persecution, thus began.

This was not only something natural and inevitable, but also indispensable and even beneficial in the long run. For, "whenever the Divine Will ordains to inspire a band of righteous people to work as torch-bearers of Truth to a corrupt humanity, there never fails to appear a band of those who pitch themselves in deadly opposition to them", inflicting on the victims all sorts of tortures and troubles. Truth and righteousness come out all the more shining when tried and tested by hardships and trials and such a period of adversity cannot also fail to bring out the best character in the martyrs, the patience, fortitude, humiliation, unflinching faith, etc. "In fact, they live if they can, for the Truth and die, if they must, for the Truth". Moral perfection can be attained and moral virtues can reach their highest standard of excellence only when they are tempered and tried by the fire of persecution. And the ultimate success, after fighting against odds, go to prove, beyond doubt, how the Divine Movement had the Divine help and guidance behind it. These severe trials are so to say, a blessing in disguise. "In the furnace of trial and persecution the one of character becomes burnished gold. Adversity and hardship bring out what lies in the man; they either make of him an everlasting character, the light of which shall shine always and everywhere, or reduce him to nothingness and oblivion. Therefore those who aspire after success must be prepared to tread the road of hardships and trials".

At first, the Quraish did not attach much importance and weight to the movement, treating it slightly with supreme contempt. They sneered and jeered at the group of followers and did not think it

worthwhile to pay any serious attention to it, for, they were quite sure that it would die, after some time, a natural death. They treated the whole movement led by the Prophet as merely the foolish effusion of a feverish imagination. So, they did not go beyond contemptous ridicule. But they found to their utter disappointment that the movement instead of dwindling down to nothingness as they anticipated, was only daily gaining ground, gaining more and more importance and numerical strength, since even some men of light and leading were drawn towards its fold. The real opposition now began in right earnest. They could no more neglect it; it was not a negligible affair. They must also begin positively serious campaign against it. The danger must be confronted by active violence.

So, the Holy Prophet was subjected to all sorts of tortures and horrible atrocities. Thorns were strewn in his way and stones were thrown in his house, dust was thrown at him, and he was pelted with stones. Once while he was praying in the Kaba lying prostrate, Abu Jahal placed on his neck the dirty entrails of a camel. He was laughed and hooted. One day a number of men from among the Quraish jointly fell upon him. Once when he was saying his prayers one Uqba-bin-Abi-Muatt, threw his sheet round his neck and pulled it with such force that the Holy Prophet fell down on his face, and he was even about to get strangled. Abu Bakr's timely appearance and intervention saved the Prophet for, he said to the cruel man thus:—"Do yon mean to kill a man, merely because he says that God is his Lord?" The story of

these atrocities is a long and sad one. Sir William Muir discussing it writes: "The people of Quraish had decided to extinguish this new religion from the face of the earth and to stop its preachers from carrying on their work. Once the opposition started it gradually developed and the hatred of the people became fierce". It was only because of the ancient and peculiar custom of the Arabs that if a man is murdered it would lead them to the clans of the murdered and the murderer to fighting, that prevented them from killing the Holy Prophet, and also because they were already tired of war; but all these did not stop them from doing all they could to torture the Prophet and his followers. "But nothing could make him waver,.....the more his enemies increased in their persecution, the more he put his heart and soul into his preaching".

But it was the common people, the slaves and others, there being even many female martyrs among them, who suffered the most and worst at the hands of the relentless persecutors, each family itself undertaking to punish its own members or dependents who happened to embrace the new faith. Even converts from high and noble families were not spared from persecution. Osman was soundly beaten by his own uncle. Zubair was made to inhale smoke. We have already noted elsewhere how Omar treated his own cousin and sister. Even Abu Bakr was not spared. The harrowing tales of the tortures undergone by slaves like Bilal, Ammar, his father, Yasir, and his mother, Sumayya, and many others, would make one's hair stand on end. "They were thrown into prison,

starved and then beaten with sticks. They were exposed to the burning heat of the desert on the scorching sands, where, when reduced to the last extremity by thirst, they were offered alternative of worshipping the idol or death.". "But Islamic teachings possessed a charm too strong for all these afflictions. They would part with life itself rather than give up Islam, which had taken deep root in their hearts.....Their fortitude added fuel to the fire of their persecutor's rage, and the latter resorted to still more bitter persecutions". This is the first phase of the struggle.

1. "Who so is able and fit, yet worketh not for himself nor for others, God is not kind to him".
2. "Charity averteth impending calamities. The tax of charity should be collected from the rich and given away to the poor".
3. "To meet friends cheerfully, and to invite, them to a feast are charitable acts".
4. "He is a hypocrite who, when he speaketh, speaketh untruth; who, making a promise, breaketh it; and who, when trust is reposed in him, faileth in his trust".
5. "Thus said Allah; "Verily those who exercise patience under trials, and forgive wrong are righteous".
6. "No man hath believed perfectly antil he wisheth for his brother that which he wisheth for himself".
7. "The best of you is he who behaveth best to his household".

—MOHAMMAD.

CHAPTER XI.

EMIGRATION TO ABYSSINIA.

BY the fifth year of the Call, the Prophet had gathered around him a faithful band of about fifty followers. Ruthless and studied persecution at the hands of the Meccans had only further strengthened and cemented their brotherhood. The tender-hearted Prophet could not bear to see his followers undergoing such inhuman sufferings. He would rather weather the whole storm himself, and was not afraid and anxious at all about his own safety, however bitter the opposition might be. But he was extremely anxious to find out a safe place of refuge for his faithful men, though the absence of each and every one of them would mean no little loss to his tender faith that was threatened on all sides with complete annihilation. He selected Abyssinia as the safest place for them to emigrate, assuring them, saying "there is a land where no one is wronged—a land of justice. Stay there until it should please Allah to open for you a way out of these difficulties". Accordingly, a batch of Muslims consisting of eleven males and four females left Mecca in secrecy with no hope of ever returning to their beloved motherland. There was among them Ruqayya, the Prophet's daughter, and also Osman with his wife. It was in the month of Rajab that the party left the place, some mounted and some on foot. Thus they reached the port of Jeddah from where they boarded a ship for Abyssinia. Most of them belonged to the well-to-do,

rich and influential families, which shows that Mecca was not safe even for them. As to the poor and the slave, they had neither the means nor the opportunity to migrate. The party reached their place of destination safe. The Quran says: "And those who fly for Allah's sake after they are oppressed, we will most certainly give them a good abode in the world". (16:41).

In the meantime, the Quraish learnt of the news of their secret and sudden departure, and they lost no time to despatch immediately a strong detachment to capture them and bring them back. But it is needless to say how they were thoroughly disappointed. Utter disappointment infuriated the enemies all the more. Not being satisfied with their merciless persecution at home, they were bent upon extirpating Islam and its men wherever they found them. So, the Muslims in the Christian Kingdom of Abyssinia, had to confront there also divers obstacles and troubles. The Quraish decided to send a deputation to the King of that country to ask him not to shelter the refugees and to demand them back. The deputation was headed by 'Abdullah-bin-Rabi' and 'Amr-bin-Aas,' who took with them valuable and handsome presents, so that the courtiers and others might be influenced to their side by the distribution of these presents among them. On reaching Abyssinia, the deputation first attempted to bring to their side the priestly class by implanting into their minds prejudiced views about the Muslim fugitives, representing them as being opposed to Christianity as well as to their ancestral form of worship. They wanted the priests to exert

their influence with the King on their behalf, to see that the Muslims are sent back to Mecca. But the King said that he would decide the matter after hearing the other side of the question from the other party. So, the next day, the Muslims in Abyssinia were sent for, and the King, Negus, inquired of them as to what they had to say regarding the demand of the deputationists and the charge of heresy was brought against them. One of the Muslims, Jafar-bin-Abi Talib, rose and addressed the King thus: "O King! we were an ignorant people, given to idolatry. We used to eat corpses even of animals that died a natural death, and to do all sorts of disgraceful things. We did not make good our obligations to our relations, and ill-treated our neighbours. The strong among us would thrive at the expense of the weak, till, at last, God raised a Prophet for reformation. His descent, his righteousness, his integrity and his absteniousness are well-known to us. He called us to the worship of God, and exhorted us to give up idolatry and stone-worship. He enjoined us to tell the truth, to make good our trust, to have regard for our kith and kin, and to do good to our neighbours, He taught us to shun everything foul and to avoid bloodshed. He forbade all sorts of indescent things, telling lies, misappropriating orphan's belongings, and bringing false accusations against the chastity of women. So we believed in him, followed him, and acted up to his teachings. Thereupon our people began to do us wrong, to subject us to tortures, thinking that we might abjure our faith and revert to idolatry. When, however, their cruelties exceeded all bounds, we came out to seek an asylum in your country, where we

hope we shall come to no harm". After this, Jafar recited from the Quran the chapter entitled "Mariam". The King was evidently deeply touched when he heard those holy words. He refused to hand over the exiles to the Meccan deputationists. Thus foiled in their attempts, they played a mean trick. The next day, obtaining an audience with the King, they told him that the Muslims held repugnant views about Jesus Christ and that they did not believe in his Divinity. So, Negus sent for them again, and this time they feared the enemies would succeed in effecting their extradition, for, they thought that the replies they might give would displease and hurt the King. Negus asked them straight what they thought about Jesus Christ, and these truthful people not caring for the consequences, boldly replied that they believed Jesus to be the chosen Prophet of God, and not the Son of God. This admirably well-put and courageous reply had a great effect. The King, picking up a straw, said: "Jesus is in fact not even this much more than the Muslims have described him to be". Negus entirely refused to comply with the request of the deputationists. All their ill-advised and thoroughly unjust efforts came to nought, and the emigrants' cause was thus a complete triumph. The just King sided with the just Cause. The generous protection of the King induced other Muslims from Mecca to migrate to Abyssinia, and the next year itself there was a second migration. This time, about one hundred and one in number, both males and females, made their migration.

It is needless to point out how these successful migrations aroused the wrath of the Quraish to the

utmost, and how their already embittered hearts were further made bitter by the unexpected turn of events in the Court of Abyssinia. A careful examination of their ruthless and heartless policy will clearly prove the fact that their enmity towards them which was of a religious character, at first, was gradually becoming more and more personal, making their behaviour more and more unreasonably bitter towards them. This attitude explains why they did not allow their Muslim enemies any rest even at Abyssinia. They wanted to root them out wherever they might be and whatever might be the cost, though they ought to have naturally felt glad for the voluntary emigration of such people who were antagonistic to their religion of idol-worship. On the other hand, they moved heaven and earth to get back the exiles. Their enmity directed against heresy thus gradually became glaringly personal. Hence, they did not even let alone the Prophet and his followers at Medina whither they had fled for safety. They were determined to extirpate the Muslims wherever they were. Hence followed those wars of sheer vengeance and hatred, and the Muslims were forced to take up arms to defend their faith.

It was not a small service that the Christian king of Abyssinia did for those Muslim brethren who sought safety under him. They were always ready to help him in any wars that he might undertake against his enemies. They felt deeply indebted to him for affording them protection at a critical time, rightly upholding their humble, but righteous cause against their inveterate foes.

CHAPTER XII.

PERSECUTION—THE NEXT PHASE.

WHILE the next of the Muslims were seeking their safety in far-off lands, the Prophet remained true to his post amidst every insult and outrage. It was at this time that by Divine revelation (Quran 15:94, and 26:214) that the Prophet was ordered by God to proclaim His message to the world, and thus he had to start the preaching in public. He climbed one day on mount Safa and called out to all the Quraish gathered there thus: "Have you ever heard me tell a lie?". In one voice they replied they did not. Then the Prophet said: "If I should tell you that hidden behind this mountain is a large army ready to attack you, would you believe me? "Certainly," was the reply from one and all. "For," they said, "we have never heard you tell a lie". Then the Prophet delivered to them the message of God, and exhorted them to give up idolatry, to shun all kinds of evil, and to follow the path of righteousness. Hearing this, they got wild, and behaved towards him very rudely, Abu Sufian being the rudest of all. In fact, this Abu Sufian proved to be one of the bitterest enemies of the Prophet, sneering and jeering at him and slighting him, closely following him like a shadow and asking people not to take him seriously. These things did not deter the Prophet from carrying on his preaching work, his sacred task of delivering God's message to mankind. More were drawn towards the new faith by

such persistent, patient and sincere efforts, despite the worst and the most sinister anti-propaganda work.

When the Quraish discovered that what all they did was of no avail, they thought of another method to put a stop to the activities of the Prophet. They went in a deputation to Abu Talib, the chief of the tribe and also the uncle of the Prophet, in order that he, as the uncle and guardian, may be persuaded to bring sufficient pressure upon the nephew to prevent him from further preaching. The deputationists, among whom was also Abu Jahal, addressed Abu Talib thus: "Your nephew slights our gods, finds faults with our ancestral religion, calls us and our forefathers ignorant and misguided. You should deal with him yourself or permit us to settle accounts with him. You are as much duty-bound to vindicate the honour of our common faith as we are". It was rather an exaggerated picture that they drew to meet their own ends, obviously misrepresenting the case. For, the Prophet had never said anything against the gods that they were worshipping, and such abuses of other's gods is against the Quranic teaching which says: "Do not abuse those whom they worship besides Allah". He only pointed out the utter futility of following idolatry, pointing out also how powerless their gods were that can do neither harm nor good. Abu Talib, however, sent them away with evasive replies and pacifying words, and the nephew continued to preach his message, drawing more and more adherents within the fold of Islam.

The Quraish, finding that all their warnings to Abu Talib about his nephew's activities were of no

avail, went to him again to represent their cause with greater vigour and with sufficient seriousness, and were bent upon coming to a definite decision with him once for all. They made him understand that they could not tolerate such state of things any more. They wanted him either to disclaim all his protection and guardianship for his nephew or definitely decide to join with him, so that they might fight out the issue to a finish. This was clearly an ultimation to Abu Talib, and he must either pacify them and make common cause with them or be prepared for the worst in behalf of his ward. This time they could not be sent away with evasive excuses. He was in an awkward and critical situation, almost between the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, there was his nephew with whom he was deeply attached. How to abandon him? There was on the other hand, his duty towards his own people, his kith and kin, against whose interest his nephew was unfortunately fighting. This could not also be slighted or ignored. The uncle was, on the whole, very much embarrassed. He sent for his nehpew and explained to him in detail the seriousness of the situation. He asked him to refrain from preaching, pointing out to him that he alone could not fight the whole tribe. At this time, on account of persistent persecutions, the followers of Islam were in a very bad and weak position. All these taken into consideration, they would have unnerved any, however courageous he might be. So, it can more or less be imagined in what a delicate and difficult situation the Prophet himself was. In fact, he was more perplexed than his uncle. The fate of his life-mission seemed to tremble in the balance.

A false step, a slight wavering, with that instinctive human weakness to yield and compromise, would have deflected the course of events through an entirely different channel. How to face the following irresistible appeal from his uncle, who said: "Have pity on me, and do not charge me with a responsibility too heavy for me. I am not a match for the united opposition of the whole of the Quraish".

Was this not really a critical situation for the Prophet? He was about to lose the only protecting hand in the person of his uncle. But for his intervention so far and the great influence he was wielding among the Quraish, he would have been done away with even in broad daylight; for, all of them were thirsting for his blood, were ready to kill him at any time who was at the bottom of the whole trouble. Even in such a helpless and hopeless state, he did not think of budging an inch. He was fully conscious of the righteousness of his high mission in life and had, therefore, that firm conviction that Divine protection was always behind it to guide and guard him. So, he spoke to his uncle thus: "I would not care even if I had to lay down my life for God, but if you are afraid of your own weakness, then leave me alone, my God is enough to help me". Continuing he said: "O uncle, should they place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, in order to make me renounce this mission, it shall not be. I will never give it up until it should please God to make it a triumph, or until I should perish in the attempt". It was with tears in his eyes that he expressed to his uncle these noble sentiments, because his firm attitude

would naturally disappoint his uncle beyond description. But Abu Talib, who had already a high opinion about his nephew's character, even though he still clung to his ancestral faith, was only much impressed and visibly moved by the latter's admirably courageous reply, and unexpectedly a new spirit of enthusiasm and boldness was consequently implanted in himself. He, who feelingly appealed, at first, to his nephew to help him out of the awkward situation, was now himself emboldened to express the following encouraging and noble words: "Do whatever you will. Under no circumstances will I desert you".

It was rather an unexpected and utter disappointment to the Quraish to learn that Abu Talib had, after all, thrown his weight on the side of his nephew, determined to stand by him at any cost, despite their repeated and united demand to bring pressure on his nephew, and despite all their ultimatums and threats in the event of his not effecting a satisfactory and amicable settlement. Hence, they tried another device, that is, they wanted to influence him by lure. They somehow wanted to get under their sole custody the Prophet. So, they took with them a handsome youth named Ammar-bin-Walid and offered him to Abu Talib for adopting him as his son instead of Mohammad who was to be handed over to them, so that they might put him to death for his high offence against religion. This was only to court another disappointment, for, Abu Talib gave them the following appropriate reply: "What a funny proposal! You want me to take charge of your boy to bring him up, while you should have mine to be put to death. This can never be".

Why not place irresistibly attractive baits before Mohammad himself ? That might perhaps bring him round to their side, making him renounce all his troublesome religious activities. This was the next move of the Quraish. Accordingly a deputation was formed. They approached the Prophet and offered him the following tempting terms: "If your ambition is to possess wealth, we will amass for you as much of it as you wish; if you aspire to win honour and power, we are prepared to swear allegiance to you as our overlord and king; if you have a fancy for beauty, you shall have the hand of the finest maiden of your own choice". It was a sufficiently tempting offer; anybody would have succumbed to it. It was a question of gaining the whole world and losing one's soul–an offer from a hopelessly soulless people. Mohammad was not the person to be so easily dissuaded from his mission. Divine steadfastness was infused into him, as pointed out in the following words of the Quran: "And had it not been that we had already made thee firm, thou wouldst certainly have been near to incline to them a little". (17 : 74) So, by the grace of God, he proved to be a proof against all unbearable temptations and irresistible allurements. Nothing could shake him from his divinely-appointed task. He was a firm rock on the way, and he gave the following firm and beautiful reply to the unholy deputation. "I am neither desirous of riches nor ambitious of dignity nor of dominion. I am sent by God, who has ordained me to announce glad tidings unto you. I give you the words of my Lord; I admonish you. If you accept the message I bring you, God will be favourable to you both in this world and in the next, if you reject my

admonitions, I shall be patient, and leave God to judge between you and me". The Meccans took this reply only as an insult. They mocked at him, and scoffed at him, and went away.

In fact, they asked him impossible things to prove his Prophethood. It was the old story of Prophets again, the only difference being that in the case of Jesus Christ his own followers insisted upon performing miracles. Professor Momeric writes: "His immediate disciples were always misunderstanding Him and His work. Wanting Him to call down fire from heaven; wanting Him to declare Himself the King of the Jews Wanting Him to show them the Father, to make God visible to their eyes; wanting Him to do, and wanting to do themselves, anything and everything that was incompatible with His great plan. This was how they treated Him until the end. When that came they all forsook Him and fled". But Christ always replied to them that it was evil to seek for a sign, and that no such sign should be given to them. It was different with the Prophet of Islam, none of his followers wanted signs; but contented themselves with the moral evidence of his mission and the moral excellence of his character. His very life and personality ideal in all respects, was in itself a sufficient miracle to them. They gathered round this friendless preacher and sacrificed their all for him. To those of the unbelievers who would ask for miracles the Prophet would reply: "God did not send me to work wonders; He has sent me to preach to you. May Allah be praised. I am no more than a man, only that I am sent as His Messenger, and I am only a preacher of God's word, the bringer of His message to mankind".

To put the whole family of the Prophet, the Banu Hashim, into trouble, was almost the last method adopted by the Quraish. Abu Talib had already forewarned the family members of the impending trouble to them at the hands of the Quraish. And all of them had resolved, with the solitary exception of Abu Lahab who was on the side of the Quraish and against the Prophet, to defend the Prophet and his Cause, whatever might be the risk involved in the attempt. Though they had their religious differences with him, they were, nevertheless deeply attached to him, because of his lofty character. On no account would they hand him over to the enemies. So, the decision of the Quraish to place a social ban on them, was not a surprise to them at all. They were fully prepared beforehand to undergo all sorts of troubles and difficulties involved in it. According to the terms of the ban, the Banu Hashim were cut off from the other families by strictly forbidding matrimonial and commercial relations with them. An agreement to this effect was drawn up and the scroll on which it was written was duly hung up in the Kaba to lend the whole affair a colour of sanctity. Learning about this ban, the Banu Hashim shifted to a place known as the Shif, meaning the prohibited quarter. But the Quraish was particular about the strict observance of the blockade. For instance, Abu Jahal offered obstruction when a near relation of Khadija, Hakim-bin-Hazam by name, tried to help her with some provision! The whole family cheerfully suffered this extremely painful ostracism for the sake of the Prophet, which they would never have done, had they not that deepest respect and affection for him!

During the period of the ban, the preaching of the Prophet was confined to the banned area, and he took full advantage of this. Only during the days of pilgrimage, when bloodshed was considered sacrilegious and when consequently he was sufficiently immune from personal danger, would he come out to preach his message to those gathered there from all quarters. Abu Lahab was, of course there, on such occasions, to slight him and his message in the eyes of the audience assembled.

Thus, the Banu Hashim "lived in a state of privation for three full years, suffering often the pangs of hunger and thirst". In the meantime, some of the gentle-hearted Quraish started objecting to the prolonged ban, and five of them finally decided to remove it. A divine sign was also revealed, pointing out to the divine disapproval of the ban. For, the scroll hung up in the Kaba was eaten up by white ants. This fact was brought to the notice of the Quraish chiefs by Abu Talib. The ban was consequenly declared null and void. The scroll was torn to pieces by five of the sympathetic Quraish. They then went to the prohibited quarter and brought the Hashim out, and sent them to their homes, while nobody had the courage to stop them.

Immediately after the removal of this ban, the Prophet had to sustain two heavy loses in the death of his dear uncle which was soon followed by the loss of his dear spouse, Khadija. "In the former he lost the protector of his youth, and one who stood between him and his enemies, and in the latter a life-long

sympathiser and a true counsellor". In Islamic history this year is known as "Aam-ul-Hazan", the "Year of Grief". With the loss of these two powerful and great supporters, the Prophet had to face greater difficulties. In fact, these two deaths ushered in a new era of troubles. The following chapter will more than ever prove our claim that it was only his conviction in his mission and absolute faith in God that made him brave all obstacles. "His was not the communion with God", says Syed Ameer Ali, "of those egoists who bury themselves in deserts or forests, and live a life of quietude for themselves alone. His was the hard struggle of the man who is led onward by a nobler destiny towards the liberation of his race from the bondage of idolatry".

To compare these most obnoxious and cruel deeds of the Quraish with the extraordinary courage and fortitude of Mohammad and his followers, is to realize the powerful force that is in Islam, which gave those undaunted soldiers the strength to fight all the forces of the earth. These most cruel deeds never swerved even one Muslim from the right path. "His life", so says Ameer Ali in the Spirit of Islam, "is the noblest record of a work nobly and faithfully performed. He infused vitality into a dormant people; he consolidated a congeries of warring tribes into a nation inspired into action with the hope of everlasting life; he concentrated into a focus all the fragmentary and broken lights which had ever fallen on the heart of man". A Christian historian writes: "The preachings and examples of the (Holy) Prophet imbibed that religiousness in his followers, which was not

found in the early followers of Christ. When Christ was led to the Cross his followers fled, and left him to die all alone; but on the contrary in the case of the Prophet of Arabia, his followers gathered round him whenever he was threatened, and were willing to lay down their lives for him".

1. "The world and all things in it are valuable; but the most valuable thing in the world is a virtuous wife".

2. "The thing which is lawful, but disliked by God, is divorce".

3. Mohammad said: "He is not faithful (i.e., a believer) who committeth adultery, or who stealeth, or who drinketh liquor, or who plundereth, or who embezzleth. Beware! Beware!".

4. "The grave is the first stage of the journy to eternity".

5. "Remember often the destroyer and cutter-off of delights, which is death".

6. "Should the bier of anyone pass by you, whether Jew, Christian, or Muslim, rise to your feet".

7. "I am no more than man. When I order you anything respecting religion receive it; but when I order you anything about the affairs of the world, then am I nothing more than man".

8. "If you derive pleasure from the good deed you perform, and feel grieved for the evil which you commit, you are a true believer".

—MOHAMMAD.

CHAPTER XIII.

BEFORE THE HIJRA.

WE concluded the last chapter by pointing out how the Prophet received almost a serious shock in the deaths of his uncle, Abu Talib, and his wife, Khadija, and how these two irreparable losses ushered in fresher troubles in the way of propagating his mission. For, tremendous was their influence over the Quraish, and their presence and influence put not a little restraint on their excessive measures of persecution. But with their deaths, all such restraints naturally passed away, and the Prophet had to face greater difficulties. One day, soon after these two sad events, when the Prophet was going out, somebody from behind threw a handful of dust at him. Returning home, his daughter was washing his head, and she could not help then shedding tears, seeing in what a pitiable predicament her father was. But the Prophet consoled her saying: "Do not weep my dear child, Allah will surely help your father". So strong and deep-rooted was his faith in Allah and in the ultimate success of his mission entrusted to him by Allah Himself, despite heartless oppositions. Another day even when the Prophet was within the sacred precincts of the Kaba, one Ukba at the instigation of Abu Jahal threw rubbish on his body. But all these and other sad incidents did not deter him, the least, from the persuasion of his divine mission. He could have very well migrated to Abyssinia, but he chose to remain behind, undergoing all risks, to fulfil faithfully

the sacred and solemn task solely entrusted to his care by God. He felt sure that those who were foremost in obstructing his path, would themselves after some time be instrumental in spreading his message far and wide. He knew that those who were bent upon taking his life would themselves one day be the same persons ready and eager to shed their blood for him. "The conviction that his deadly enemies would one day be his devoted friends was deeply seated in his heart". He was always entertaining the fullest hope that Mecca, the land of his birth, though sunk in the basest and baseless superstition and idolatry, would one day see the light of truth as interpreted by Islam. Even in the most desperate moments, he had never abandoned hope. In fact, one of the secrets of the thorough success of his mission, lies in this marvellous optimism. So, he was not disheartened or dejected at all, but only he chose to give a little respite to the Meccans by diverting his energies a little to other quarters. He did so, not because he was afraid of being baffled by the stubbornness of the Quraish. Far from it. He was never baffled, nor was his mind a bit ruffled or stirred, even in moments of greater danger.

Therefore the Holy Prophet chose to divert his activities to Taif, a town some forty miles from Mecca, where he went with Zaid and where he hoped the people might listen to his preaching. There he, at first, approached three brothers who belonged to the noblest and most respectable family of the locality. But he had only downright disappointment from them, for, they did not care to listen to his words. Nothing daunted, he stayed there for about ten days, making people acquainted with his message, but all his efforts

were of no avail. Like the Meccans, the people of Taif also were not fortunate enough to embrace Islam early at the first instance. Here I cannot help mentioning the fact that any other man would have, in despair, given up the task as an impossible one, but the Holy Prophet did not, for, he had that unshakeable conviction in God's guidance. He was never in despair; he always hoped that the success would be his, and that the greater the obstacles, the greater and profounder would be the triumph. He was, therefore, not sore when the people of Taif not only refused but also rebuked him and his teachings. He was taunted with the remark that he must first convince his own people, to prove the truth of his claim. One day they lined the route, and as he passed, they pelted him with stones. "When dripping with blood and unable to walk further he would seat himself, a wretch would again raise him up by the hand. 'Walk on', he would shout at him, 'this is no place for you to rest at'." This went on for three long miles, and his legs were sorely and severely wounded, for, he was pelted with stones after stones, "till his very shoes were besmeared with blood". Bleeding and exhausted he marched on, till he entered a fruit garden where he found some rest and shelter. The owner of this garden named Utba-bin-Rabia, a noblemen of Mecca, though a non-believer, was moved to see the pitiable plight of the Prophet. He sent him a bunch of grapes through his Christian slave. Stretching his hands to receive the grapes, the Prophet uttered the words, "In the name of Allah". The slave surprised at this, wanted to know the significance of the phrase, and the Prophet gave him an idea about the message of Islam, and the

slave at once and on the spot embraced Islam. Utba watching this, told his slave that it might lead him to persecution, but the latter remained staunch.

Only imagine in what a helpless state the Prophet was, taunted and shunned by everybody, and sorely wounded in body, heart and soul! Yet, even at such a critical and trying juncture, he never exhibited any weakness of mind-dejection or despondency. He never said, **"Eli, Eli, Lama Sabaktani,"** (O my God O my God! why hast thou forsaken me?) But out of his heart went forth a prayer, so melting and touching and so full of faith in God, that it has its own classical excellence and significance. The following was his prayer:—

"O my God! to Thee do I complain of the feebleness of my strength, of my lack of resourcefulness and my insignificance in the eyes of people. Thou art most Merciful of all the merciful. Thou art the Lord of the weak. To whom art Thou to entrust me, to an unsympathetic foe, who would sullenly frown at me, or to a close friend, to whom Thou hast given control over my affair. Not in the least do I care for anything except that I may have Thy protection for me. In the light of Thy face do I seek shelter—the light which illumines the heaven and dispels all sorts of darkness, and which controls all affairs in this world as well as in the hereafter. May it never be that I should incur Thy wrath, or that Thou should be angry with me. There is no strength, nor power, but through Thee".

"With marvellous calmness he underwent all the hardships that no son of man can bear. With

surprising fortitude he bore all those troubles that might tempt one to commit suicide. What a firm faith in God, what a cheerful resignation to His supreme Will, and what an unalloyed spiritual happiness! All these, he says, are insignificant so long as he enjoys God's pleasure". In fact, the sufferings that he underwent at Taif raised his personality and character to supreme sublimity, for, fortitude, forgiveness, and faith reached their ideal stage in his person here. It was perhaps, a divine trial and ordeal. Sir William Muir, writes thus about the Prophet's journey to Taif, pointing out his spiritual greatness: "In Mohomet's journey to Taif his greatness is amply seen. A single man whose own people not only looked down upon him, but had expelled him, leaves the city in the Cause of God, and goes to a place of unbelievers, like Jonah, and calls them to embrace Islam which shows that he had absolute faith in his mission".

After resting in this garden for some time the Prophet, proceeded towards Mecca, and halted at a place called Nakhla, where he had a few days' stay. He made the next halt at the cave of Hira from where he sent words to Mutim-bin-Adi that he desired to return to Mecca, but that he would do so if he was assured of protection. Mutim, though an unbeliever, was a noble gentleman. Not onty did he assure the Prophet of sufficient protection, but calling all his sons, he went with them to the Kaba, and all armed remained on guard till the Prophet finished his religious obligations there.

Soon after his return to Mecca the days of pilgrimage came, and the Holy Prophet called on

each of the clan, coming from outside to perform the pilgrimage, and expounded to them the theories of Islam. The Quraish, ever-ready to obstruct and Abu Lahab ever-ready to lead the way, managed as usual to see that none of the outsiders pay any attention to the Prophet, and the consequence was that whenever he approached any tribe, it harshly rejected him. Abu Lahab was there to denounce him before these tribes, as a heretic, telling them that he wanted to overthrow the sway of the "Lat" and the "Uzza". Yet, he did not lose heart, and two of the clans treated him kindly. One said that they liked Islam, but added that they were not bold enough to give up the religion and beliefs of their forefathers, while the second promised to embrace Islam, if the Prophet would agree to give them a share in the kingdom he would realise. This incident, trifling as it is, throws light on the fact that all those people believed that the Prophet's efforts would ultimately and surely be crowned with success. Regarding the condition of sharing the kingdom, the Prophet replied: "It depends on God to bestow a kingdom, and on whomsoever he likes; therefore, I cannot and will not promise what is not in my power." If personal gain and benefit had been his aim, as some blind critics would have us believe, nothing would have prevented the Prophet from winning not one clan but most of the clans by promise of shares, but the true fact is that the achievement of temporal power was not his aim at all, as will be pointed out in the Medinite period, the events of which amply prove that the Prophet was not for worldly gains. Why, he need not have gone far since his own people, the Quraish themselves, were

ready, and had even offered him the riches and kingdom of whole Arabia. But he was not for all these. "His heart was burning within him at the degenerate state of man. Man's elevation in the scale of humanity was the one purpose of his life".

Tufail Bin Amr, the chief of the clan of 'Doas' came to Mecca on one occasion, and the Meccans to forestall the Prophet went to his son and told him that he had come at a time when one man from among them had caused confusion and disruption by magic and sorcery, and that therefore, to avoid from becoming a prey to the mischief, he should not hear anything that person may have to say. Tufail says that he believed the Quraish and kept himself on guard, but that one day when passing the mosque he saw the Prophet offering his prayers. This, says Tufail, impressed him so much that he decided to listen to what this man had to say, thinking that if found rot he would reject it. With this in view he approached the Prophet and asked him to tell him of his views. So, the Prophet recited to him the verses from the Quran, and spoke of the theory of the Unity of God. This convinced Tufail that the Prophet had told him the truth, and he embraced Islam. Later, when returning to his clan, he begged the Prophet to pray for him, so that he may succeed in converting the members of his tribe to Islam. On his return, he was, however, able to convert only two, his father and his wife, while the rest only showed enmity towards the Cause. Baffled at this, he returned to the Prophet and requested him thus: "O Apostle of God! My tribesmen have insulted me and rejected the faith

I offered. Pray that they all may be cursed". The Prophet raised his hand and uttered: "My God! Guide the tribe of Doas". This event alone places him on a pedestal of his own, to the height of which no Prophet reached. For, we see in the lives of the Prophets that they all, even including the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, cursed and invoked the wrath of God on those who ill-treated them. Even fig trees did not escape their curse. So transparently pure was the Prophet's heart that bore no malice, and that knew no vengeance. Did he not forgive even his bitterest enemies? Look at the treatment that he received at the hands of the men at Taif and look at the sublimity of character then exhibited by him! It is said that he was informed that divine punishment would be meted out to them if he so desired. "They are an ignorant lot", was his characteristically calm reply.

This then was the condition. The Prophet was surrounded on all sides by forces that were very hostile. Every attempt of his used to be frustrated by the Quraish. The only thing that kept him resolute was the conviction that the Cause of Allah cannot but ultimately triumph. Bypati ence, forbearance, courage, and preaching he tried to win them over to his side, but so far he had met with only failures in his attempts to bring about any great measure of success among them. Yet, he continued in his efforts, and once while preaching as usual he happened to meet a few men of the Khazraj clan of Medina. After ascertaining about their antecedents he preached to them the message of God, and invited them to

embrace Islam. These people knew and were expecting the "That Prophet" as prophesied in the Jewish scriptures, and when they heard and grasped the beauty of the teachings of the Holy Prophet, they believed without doubt that he was 'that Prophet' alluded to in the scriptures. Consequently all the six of the Khazraj embraced the faith then and there, taking the following pledge:—"We will not associate anything with God, we will not steal, nor commit adultery, nor fornication; we will not kill our children; we will abstain from calumny and slander; we will obey the Prophet in everything that is right, and we will be faithful to him in weal and woe".

On their return to Medina, much enthusiasm prevailed there over the new faith, and the Prophet's name became a household word. The result was that a great number embraced Islam, and a dozen of them went to Mecca next year to perform the pilgrimage. But to the Prophet the whole year was a period of anxiety and worry as to the fate of the converts and their further efforts. So, when the next year came, he was seen anxiously moving eagerly looking for some from Medina, to give him the news. At last, at Aqaba he found some who received him with respect and honour. They were a dozen in number, six of them being those who had already been to Mecca the previous year and who had already taken the pledge. The other six who had come to represent the important tribes at Medina, also embraced Islam, taking the same pledge. These people, when returning to Medina, requested the Prophet to send along with them someone to

propagate the faith in their place. Accordingly, the Prophet sent with them Musab-bin-Umair, and through his efforts Islam quickly spread in Medina. God was kinder to the Muslims here, and soon every household started talking about Islam, and a great number from among the Aus and Khazraj embraced the new faith. In other cases, whole clans embraced Islam in a day. Here the history of Islam would have been different if the Jews had not taken alarm at the rapid success of Islam.

When we turn from this encouraging news of Medina to the happenings at Mecca, we see that the whole year was one of great distress, trouble, and misfortune. The atrocities of the Quraish became more and more severe and varied, and every good news from Medina only added more fuel to their enmity. Amidst all these troubles, one remarkable happening during this period deserves a detailed mention. I refer to the Prophet's Ascension, what is called in Arabic 'Meraj'. There is a controversy as to whether the Ascension was bodily, or purely an occurrence in vision, a spiritual Ascension, of the soul in trance. The Quran speaks of it in the following words:—"Praise be to him who carried His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Mosque which is more remote, whose precincts We have blessed, that We might show him some of Our signs, for He is the Hearer and the Seer." (XVII:1). Stanley Lanepoole speaking of it writes: "It is still a grand vision full of glorious imagery, fraught with deep meaning". The story of the Ascension is, that in the night the Angel Gabriel came to the Prophet and beckoned him to follow him to the presence of God. The Prophet in

rapture went with the Angel, and passed through the seven Heavens, and in each Heaven he met the Prophet that had been raised before him. When he reached the seventh Heaven, Gabriel left him saying that he could go no further. The Prophet went the way alone till he reached and felt the nearness of God; it was here that the five times prayer a day were enjoined on the followers of the Prophet. He was also shown the Heaven and Hell, and when he returned to his room, his bed which he had left was still warm. I do not see any reason why it should not be believed that the Ascension was bodily, specially if we can believe in the bodily Resurrection of Christ, and in the raising of other Prophets.

The interval which elapsed between this and the next pilgrimage was the most critical period of the Prophet's mission. Regarding this, a few words of praise escapes even from the pen of Muir, the hostile critic, who says thus:—"Mohomet, thus holding his people at bay, waiting in the still expectation of Victory, to outward appearance defenceless, and with his little band, as it were, in the lion's mouth, yet trusting in his Almighty power whose messenger he believed himself to be, resolute and unmoved—presents spectacle of sublimity paralleled only in the sacred records by such scenes as that of the Prophet of Israel, when he complained to his master, 'I, even I only, am left'." Who will not admire "the grandeur of his character and his sublime trust in God, his resolution of purpose, his steadfastness to his Cause against overwhelming odds, and his sincere belief in his own Mission and its final victory".

Next year brought seventy-five Medinites to pilgrimage, including two women. They had come with the intention of inviting the Prophet to Medina. He met them one night at the same place, Aqaba. This time he was accompanied by his uncle, Abbas, who spoke to the Medinites thus: "You are aware of the position Mohammad occupies amongst us. So far we have been protecting him from his enemies. He is quite safe and respected here. But now you wish him to accompany you to your town and live with you there. If you believe you will fulfil the covenant on which you wish to take him there, and pledge to shield him in every way, you are at liberty to undertake the responsibility. If, however, you think you will not be able to protect him, better give him up from this very moment. And mind you, you are welcome to take him along with you, provided you are prepared to withstand the united opposition of both the Arabs and the Gentiles". The Medinites who became known as "Ansars", meaning helpers, agreed to swear allegiance on any terms. They said, "Speak, O Prophet of God, and exact any pledge for thyself and thy God". The Prophet recited to them a passage from the Holy Quran, and it was followed by a short sermon. Then he said to them: "I demand allegiance of you to the effect that you would defend me against my enemies, just as you defend your wives and children". Bara-bin-Marur who was the chief among them, in their behalf, gave to the Prophet the necessary assurance of protection. Then the Prophet selected from among them twelve persons as their chiefs.

So, the Prophet went over to Medina, being invited by the Medinites themselves. The assurance

of protection demanded by him from them clearly shows how he apprehended trouble from the Meccans even though he might be in Medina. For, did not the Quraish try their level best to oust the Muslim refugees from Abyssinia? They would and they did follow the same course with regard to the Muslim emigrants at Medina.

In spite of all the precautions taken so that the Quraish may not know anything about this secret understanding arrived at between the Prophet and his Medinite followers, and in spite of the fact that the whole affair was kept strictly confidential even from the other Medinites, the secret leaked out by the next day itself. But the Quraish could do nothing. The Ansars had already left the place by that time, and the Quraish were not able to overtake them. They got hold of two persons, but one of them managed to escape from their clutches. The other named Sad-bin-Ubada, was taken back to Mecca, He was dragged along the way and was mercilessly treated. Fortunately for him, some Meccans to whom he had done some favour previously, intervened in his behalf and so he was allowed to go back to Medina.

By this time the persecution had reached its summit, and all known form of torture were obstinately meted out to the Muslims. The Prophet apprehended that it may culminate in a general massacre and so he advised his followers to seek immediate safety in Medina—this city was till then known by the name of Yasrab. We know how the Prophet had recourse to the same device before this, when he advised his followers to migrate to Abyssinia,

because the persecutions of the enemy had reached to an extreme degree. Under perfect secrecy the Muslim families in two's and three's left the place, and went over to Medina where they were warmly received. After some time, the whole city presented a spectacle of emptiness. Utba-bin-Rabia at the sight of empty houses which were once full of life, bustle and activity remarked thus: "Every dwelling place, even if it had been blessed ever so long, will one day become prey to unhappiness and misery. And all this is the work of one among us, who has scattered us, and ruined our affairs". (Ibn Hisham). Thus, all had left the place without any mishap, and the Prophet was left along with two of his devoted followers, Abu Bakr and Ali. He was to be in Mecca, however strong might be the storm that raged around him, till he received the Divine sanction to leave the place.

This fact again shows the absolute faith the Prophet had in God. The Meccans' enmity was daily growing bitter. Their aim was to kill him; they were getting more and more determined about it. Yet he remained behind these deadly foes, after having sent all those who could have resisted attack on his life. He was not anxious about his safety which he had entirely entrusted in the hands of God. For, he knew fully well that God who had entrusted with him His Mission, would never allow him to be killed before its due fulfilment. But he was most anxious about the safety of others, and dreaded any kind of bloodshed that would mar the unfolding of his task. How unlike Jesus if the Gospel writers are correct who

have put down thus: "Think not that I have come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law". (Math. X-34, 35). On the other hand, see what the Holy Prophet says about his advent: "I am come as a mercy to the worlds", and the Quran affirms it. If personal safety was his aim, he could have easily gone to Medina, and none of the Muslims would have objected to it. But he preferred to remain in Mecca though alone and unprotected, and only others' safety was uppermost in his mind. What a rare example of a personality.

The Meccans, thus baffled and outwitted in all their attempts, finally decided to put an end to the Prophet's life by besieging his house in the night and killing him early in the next morning, when he would come out to go for his morning prayer. The Prophet knew what was to happen and was now ready to meet the emergency. For, the Divine revelation had that day told him of the united plot of the Quraish, commanding him to leave the city for Medina. How the Prophet managed to get out from the clutches of the hungry and angry wolves will be dealt with in the next chapter. Here I would like to point out to the readers and emphasize once more that the motive power was his deep-rooted conviction that there was always the Divine hand behind his sacred Cause, for it was the Cause of God Himself. It was a conviction pursued through resolute action that ultimately ended in his success. All Prophets had to face hardships,

obstacles, taunts, rebukes and persecutions, but those the Prophet of Arabia suffered were many and mighty, and their very immensity and intensity would have staggered and stunned the stoutest hearts and keenest brains. We see Jesus Christ in the face of lesser despair crying out, "Eli, Eli, Lama Sabaktani", (O my God, O my God ! why hast Thou forsaken me?). But the Prophet of Islam even in greater danger never spoke to God in despair. Only a strong soul can pour out the following words of prayer: "O My God! to Thee I complain of the feebleness of my strength, lack of my resourcefulness. Thou art the most Merciful. Thou art the Lord of the weak. To whom art Thou to entrust me? To a foe who are deadly, or to a friend? Not in the least do I care for anything except that I may have your protection. In thee I seek shelter. May it never be that I should incur your wrath, or that Thou should be angry with me. There is no strength, no power except that which we get through Thee". These words speak volumes enough to make the critics recoil from attacking this personality, guided by mere malice and pure prejudice, and giving out nothing but deliberate misrepresentations. I respect all the Prophets, and I believe in them, and it is my bounden duty to do as a true Muslim. But I cannot help admiring and following this one, this unique Prophet and personality in all ways; for, my conscience tells me that all that other Prophets had taught had now become useless and obsolete, like an old law that has no place after the enactment of a new one.

This chapter may fittingly be closed with a beautiful and pertinent quotation from Syed Ameer

Ali's book: "The Spirit of Islam". He says about the Prophet thus:—"Baffled, he never falters; beaten, he never despairs. He struggles on with indomitable spirit to achieve the work assigned to him. His purity and nobleness of character, his intense and earnest belief in God's Mercy, bring round him ultimately many a devoted heart; and when the moment of the severest trial comes, like the faithful mariner, he remains steadfast at his post until all his followers are safe, and then betakes himself to the hospitable shore".

"O People of the Scripture! Do not exaggerate in your religion nor utter aught concerning Allah save the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah, and his word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers."

—KORAN IV: 171.

"And verily We gave unto Moses the Scripture and We caused a train of messengers to follow after him, and We gave unto Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty), and We supported him with the holy Spirit. Is it ever so, that, when there cometh unto you a messenger (from Allah) with that which ye yourselves desire not, ye grow arrogant, and some ye disbelieve and some ye slay?."

—KORAN CH. II: 87.

CHAPTER XIV.

HIJRA—THE FLIGHT.

IT was the thirteenth year of the Call. The Prophet was almost left alone in Mecca with two of his most trusted comrades, Abu Bakr and Ali, still by his side. All his other comrades and followers had already, by this time, left their sweet homes and warm hearths, seeking shelter either in Abyssinia or Medina. The Prophet was thus in a helpless condition, surrounded by bitter enemies on all sides. Abu Bakr, naturally growing anxious about the safety of his master's precious life, used to suggest to him an early migration to Medina. But, that he would not do so until commanded by God, was the Prophet's reply to him. He must and he did wait for the Divine signal.

The stormy clouds were, day by day, gathering thick above him. We know how the Prophet was, on account of various reasons, providentially saved from individual attempts at assassinating him. Now the crimes of the Quraish against the Prophet and his followers were brought to a brim, to a maximum height, by their final decision to do away with his life, since they found it was quite an opportune moment to carry out such a drastic, though perilous plan. So the chiefs of the Quraish assembled together in their "Dar-un-Nadwa", their Assembly House, where they used to discuss about their national affairs. Some suggested that the Prophet should be chained and put

into prison where he would be killed by starvation. But objection was raised to this suggestion, pointing out how his sympathisers and followers gaining strength and influence would somehow see to his release. Another proposal was put forward to the effect that he should be sent in exile. This was not also deemed an effective measure. For, wherever he might be, he was sure to gather round him many followers by his personality and character, and by his impressive and inspirational teachings; and with such staunch followers he might some day even overcome his enemies, the Quraish. Then came the final, well-thought out though ill-directed proposal from the arch enemy of the Prophet, from Abu Jahl, and all unanimously agreed to put into immediate practice what he suggested. Stout and stalwart youths from each clan belonging to noble families were to be selected, and these, armed with sharp swords, should in a body assassinate the Prophet. In this way, each clan would share in taking vengeance on their common enemy and at the same time no particular individual would be blamed and charged for the act. It would also avoid the cause for tribal bloodshed and the party concerned could thus be appeased with blood-money. It was indeed a capital idea, and the Quraish decided to put it into execution without delay.

They proposed so and very seriously too. But God in His inscrutable ways disposed off the affair in quite a different manner, throwing all their serious plans out of gear. The Prophet was informed of the impending danger through Divine revelation, and on

that particular day when he was to be assassinated, he was asked not to sleep in his bed that night. The Divine revelation also told him that it was time for him to migrate to Medina. The Prophet sent for the devoted Ali and told him that he should take his place in bed that night, while he himself would escape from his house unnoticed, meeting Abu Bakr at an appointed place. Ali had to be left behind, because the Prophet had to return the trusts of some people, and the work was entrusted with Ali. Abu Bakr was also similarly informed, and he was asked to make the necessary preparations for the flight. After these arrangements, the Prophet returned to his house.

It is needless to say that Abu Bakr shed tears of joy when he was informed that he was to have the rare fortune of accompanying the Prophet in his memorable flight. He never thought of the hardships and trials involved. He was always anxious about he safety of his Master. Was he not himself suggesting to the Prophet to leave the place for Medina? Now that the time had come for the flight, what greater pleasure could he have than faithfully following him and looking after his needs and safety? Does this not show the disciple's whole-hearted devotion for his Master? It was no wonder then that he shed tears of joy.

Again, look at the readiness and willingness of Ali to be in the bed of the Prophet, staking his very life for the latter. What a noble devotion and a rare sacrifice! Again, look at the fact of the people

entrusting with the Prophet their property, despite the oppositions amidst which he was living. What an unquestioned confiidence in his integrity! And he did not leave the place until he had made proper arrangements with Ali for the due return of things to the respective persons concerned. The two greatest disciples thus contributed their maximum service at such a critical time when Islam and its author was threatened with disaster and death.

According to the Prophet's instructions, Abu Bakr, was ready waiting at the appointed place, provided with the necessary things, and he had also two camels with him. Soon after dusk, all the youths of the Quraish laid seige to the house of the Prophet, and waited there throughout the whole night, eagerly looking for the Prophet's coming out, so that they may, according to the pre-arranged plan, fall on him with their swords and kill him. A question might be raised as to why they did not go in and finish off their foul business at once. The answer is that it was against the Arab sense of chivalry to kill a person within the four walls of his house. In the thick of the night the Prophet left the place, dashing through the very crowd of besiegers who failed to recognise him in their excitement. See what a rare courage the Prophet exhibited in coolly effecting his escape through the very midst of the blood-thirsty assassins. And what an unshakeable and undoubted faith in the protecting hand of God! And God did blind the enemies' eyes, and so they could not see their victim who was dashing through before their very eyes. A slight hesitation on the part of the Prophet, a

slightly awkward behaviour at the moment, would have certainly spoiled and upset the affair, would have meant certain disaster. He also remained so far courageous amidst deadly enemies, could not possibly fail to show that courage at this critical hour. This rare courage was born of his singular and implicit faith in God. All the night the besiegers kept peeping in through the hole in the door, and they saw somebody sleeping on the bed. They never thought that it was the wrong person who was in bed there. So, they waited outside till late in the morning. Then they, naturally getting impatient and guessing something had gone wrong rushed into the house to find only, after all their long waiting, Ali, the wrong person. Their wrath knew no bounds, but Ali remained calm and unquailed, answering their angry questions convincingly. There was no use of taking vengeance on the wrong person, though they might be in the height of their wrath. So, better discretion prevailing over them, they finally left the place, leaving Ali unmolested.

In the meantime, the Prophet was already with his friend, Abu Bakr, in the cave of Saur, situated some three miles from Mecca. This cave and the cave of Hira occupy a very important place in the history of Islam; for, from the one the Prophet had the Divine revelation and Call, and from the other, Islam took its new birth. The memorable flight thus registered a fresh life for the infant faith; it is a red-letter day in the annals of Islam, for, the Muslim year begins from the day of the flight. This flight is known as Hijra in the Arabic language.

The disappointed Quraish did not leave the matter at that. They only re-doubled their vigour and wanted to meet the emergency anyway. A big reward for the capture of the Prophet was proclaimed throughout the city. Not content with this step, they sent out tracking parties to make a vigorous search in the neighbourhood for the fugitives. One of the tracking parties closely following the foot-prints, reached up to the very mouth of the cave. Abu Bakr, hearing the foot-steps, felt very anxious and was much grieved, not on his account, but because the Prophet's precious life was in extreme peril. It seemed their fate was every moment trembling in the balance. A step more in the right direction and a cunning peep into the cave would have certainly revealed them to their enemies with dreadful consequences. Abu Bakr said to the Prophet that they were lost, as they were only two, and the enemy so many, but the latter replied: "We are three, for God is with us, and He will protect us". There is no other example in the history of the world where a man expressed such deep faith and showed such an extraordinary calmness and perfect tranquillity of mind, as the Holy Prophet in the face of sure death and utter defeat. The enemy was at the mouth of the cave, armed to the teeth and eager to kill, fierce with rage and thirsty for the blood, but the Prophet was then taking the only companion with him not to be disheartened, but to take courage, for God was with them. The Quran says thus about this: "If you will not aid him, Allah certainly aided him when those who disbelieved expelled him, he being the second of the two, when they were both in the cave, when he said to his

companion: "Grieve not, surely Allah is with us". (9:40). It was really God that saved them from sure death, it was a voice from above that kept his heart and head steady and unperturbed, telling him not to fear. God came to him to save him, for, he was working for Him. The enemy, having reached the mouth of the cave, lost the trace of the footsteps. This was a sure indication to them that the fugitives whom they were pursuing hotly must be somewhere there. One of them suggested to look inside the cave; and if they had done so, it would have meant a fatal blow both to the Prophet and his religion. God evidently meant it otherwise. The others only laughed at the man who suggested a look into the cave, and told him that they would not waste their time looking for him in the cave, on the mouth of which a spider was weaving its web in the breeze. It was nothing but God's will that reaching the very cave they could not get at him. They returned to hunt for their victim in other places, without knowing that by doing so they were only further losing all chances of capturing him.

Thus protected by God, the Prophet and his friend remained in the cave for full three days. Abu Bakr's son kept them informed of all the news in the town and his daughter Asma, daily brought to them food; his servant Amir-bin-Fuhaira, used to bring to the cave the goats he was tending, supplying them with the necessary quantity of milk. At last, they came out of the cave on the fourth day; by that time the search was over and the ground was clear. Guided by a non-Muslim, Abdullah-bin-Uraiqit by name, they

started Medinaward. Avoiding all frequented and known paths, they went on, resting for the day on account of the heat, and travelling only in the night. Abu Bakr carefully looked to the comforts of the Prophet.

The big reward of hundred camels announced for the capture of the Prophet had already induced many brave men to go in vigorous search for him and Suraqa-bin-Malik, a stout and well-built man, was one of them. He heard the news that three persons mounted on camels were on their way to Medina. Without informing anybody he secretly started to hunt after them, donned in his armour and riding on a swift horse. His horse stumbled on the way and he fell down. It was a bad omen, but the prize was too alluring for him to give up the attempt. So, jumping again on the stead, he continued the chase, but the horse stumbled again, throwing him violently at a distance—again a bad omen indeed. But unheeded he mounted the horse and proceeded swifter. Now he was almost pretty close to the Prophet and he was just aiming an arrow at him. But then the animal stumbled a third time, its feet going deep into the sand, and the rider thrown off his seat with force. "Then" says Suraqa, "it transpired to me that it was preordained that the Prophet's Cause should triumph". Giving up the intention of murder at this inner voice, he approached the Prophet in a penitent mood, and begged his forgiveness, requesting him not to take him to task when he should come to power. The Prophet forgave him smilingly and willingly, and gave him the happy prophetic news that he would

one day wear the gold bangles of the Ruler of Persia. This was a true Prophecy of the event which happened twenty-four years later; then these words found fulfilment when the kingdom of Chosroes of Persia fell to the hands of Omar, and Suraqa was sent for and decorated with the bangles.

This steadfastness and perfect tranquillity displayed by the Prophet was due, no boubt, to the Divine revelations that came down often and that gave him no small encouragement amidst all the harassing obstacles. For instance, he received the following consolation while fleeing from Mecca to Medina: "Verily, He that enjoined the Quran upon thee shall bring thee back to Mecca". (28:85). From this verse the Prophet gathered that he would one day return to Mecca with flying colours. He loved the city of his birth dearly, and it was with a wounded heart and with extreme unwillingness that he left it. Even about Hijrat, (migration) the Prophet was informed through revelations long before the actual moment for it came. He knew beforehand that the rise and success of Islam was to be from another centre. Before his flight he had vision to the effect that he had migrated to a rich and fertile place. This could only be Medina, still noted for its gardens. It was in the Hijrat that the climax of the Prophet's helplessness was reached, pointing out all the more clearly how Divine help was always at the back of the movement. The Quran says that if the Meccans did not help him, Allah certainly did. The Prophet was ever fully concious of his never-failing Divine help in all his struggles. So he never wavered, never at any

moment, showed the least spirit of despondecy or despair. In that extreme hour of helplessness when danger was pretty imminent, he coolly consoled his anxious friend saying "Do not be grieved, for surely Allah is with us".

One day, when thus journeying to Medina, they were all hungry, and therefore when they came into a village, they approached an old woman who was sitting at her door, and asked her if she could give them anything to eat. The woman replied that she had nothing, not even her goats whose milk she could have given, except one extremely feeble that was left behind. The Prophet asked her to permit them to milk the feeble and dried goat, and the permission being given, the goat was milked. It was a surprise to note that the goat gave them enough supply of milk.

Amidst all these helplessness and struggles which culminated in the Prophet's flights to Medina from the dear land of his birth, we may note that the Meccan period, the first stage in the wonderful drama of Islamic religion, was in itself a glorious achievement for the Prophet and his religion. We have seen in the foregoing chapters how the Prophet had to work in Mecca in the teeth of bitter opposition. At every step, the enemies tried to put an end to his teachings by force, bribery, compulsion and cruelty, but the Prophet never for a moment wavered from his mission, but continued it with all his spiritual and moral force, the result of which was that at the end of the thirteen years, marking his Meccan period, he had

succeeded in converting about three hundred people, who never for a sinlge moment hesitated in thought or action to lay down their everything for him; for in him and his teachings they had such an implicit confidence. Is this not a great achievement for the Prophet and does this not speak volume for the great, inspiring personality behind the movement? Says Mohammad Ali in his book: "Mohammad the Prophet: "It was the soul force of a single personality that wrought this miraculous transformation. In a marvellous short time, hundreds of people, sunk in vice, and superstition, given to the most debased forms of idolatry and fettered in the shackles of the dirtiest and most cruel social customs, were uplifted and raised to the heights of morality. He breathed a new life into them, so that the principles of truth, of virtue, of doing good to fellow-men, which they once accepted, they never parted with, even though harassed in a most terrible manner. He infused into them a sense of human dignity and responsibility. Here indeed was the greatest benefactor of humanity".

It was indeed a marvellous metamorphosis that Mohammad wrought within this short period of thirteen years. Even a critic like Sir William Muir is compelled to write thus: "In so short a period, Mecca had, by this wonderful movement, been rent into two factions, which unmindful of the old land-marks of tribe and family, had arrayed themselves in deadly opposition one against the other. The believers bore persecution with a patience and tolerant spirit, and though it was their wisdom to do

so, the credit of a magnanimous forbearance may be freely accorded. One hundred men and women, rather than abjure their precious faith, had abandoned home and sought refuge, till the storm should be overpast, in Abyssinian exile. And now again a large number, with the Prophet himself, were emigrating from their fondly-loved city with its sacred temple, to them the holiest on the earth, and fleeing to Medina. There the same marvellous charm had within two or three years been preparing for them a brotherhood ready to defend the Prophet and his followers with their blood. Jewish truth had long sounded in the ears of the men of Medina, but it was not until they heard the spirit-stirring strains of the Arabian Prophet that they too awoke from slumber, and sprang suddenly into a new and earnest life".

So, we see how the hard, Meccan life of the Prophet and his followers was a necessary training period that created an army of followers, thoroughly tried and perfectly disciplined. The infant faith, built on such a firm foundation, naturally marched with unprecedented progress under the hospitality of the Ansars in Medina. The historic flight of the Prophet is a significantly connecting link between the Meccan life of adversity and trials and the Medinite life of continued success and prosperity. What a towering and arresting personality !

Regarding this contrasted life of the Prophet, his life in Mecca and his life in Medina, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, in his book: "The Ideal Prophet" draws the following timely and beautiful moral. "The

life in Mecca had been a life of adversity, of trial, of worries; in Medina it was a life of success and of prosperity. And herein lies a lesson for the Muslims of to-day. Their condion is more like the Prophet's experience tn Mecca; it is a time of trial. But if they persevere, if they show high morality, if they come out faithful, if they become united and active, if they be but true to themselves, to their brethren, to their faith, to their Prophet and to their God, they will meet with same success that came to Mohammad".

"And when the angels said: O Mary! Lo! Allah hath chosen thee and made thee pure, and hath preferred thee above (all) the women of creation. O Mary! Be obedient to thy Lord, prostrate thyself and bow with those who bow (in worship). This is of the tidings of things hidden. We reveal it unto thee (Muhammad). Thou wast not present with them when they threw their pens (to know) which of them should be the guradian of Mary, nor wast thou present with them when they quarrelled (thereupon). (And remember) when the Angels said: O Mary! Lo! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a word from Him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, illustrious in the world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near (unto Allah). He will speak unto mankind in his cradle and in his manhood, and he is of the righteous. She said: My Lord! How can I have a child when no mortal hath touched me? He said: So (it will be). Allah createth what He will. If He decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only: Be! and it is."

—KORAN CH. III: 42-47.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PROPHET IN MEDINA.

MEDINA, the city of lights, was till then an unknown place, and was originally inhabited y Amalekites who were overwhelmed and destroyed by the successive colonization of the place by the Jews. These Jews, fleeing before the Greek and the Babylonian invaders, entered Arabia and colonised the northern part of Hedjaz. The important and powerful of these colonies, were those of Bani Nazir at Khaiber, Bani Khuraiza at Fidak and Bani Kaninkas near Medina. These established their power and dominated the country until the establishment of two Khatanite tribes, the Aus and the Khazraj, in Medina. These two powerful tribes came into constant conflict with the Jews. The Aus Khazraj originally belonged to Yeman from where they shifted after the great floods. Their religion was idolatry, which was later modified to a great extent by the Jewish influence, and which modification in fact prepared the way for them to enter Islam easily. For one thing, they were quite familiar about what the Jewish scriptures were telling regarding the promised Prophet. These people after their conversion became known as Ansars, who had promised the Prophet and his religion protection in Medina.

The Prophet and his companion, Abu Bakr, reached Medina after eight days journey. It was on the 12th of Rabi I, in the 13th year of his mission,

(June 28, 622 A.D.) that he arrived there. News had already reached there beforehand regarding his disappearance from Mecca, though none knew about his three days' stay in the Cave. So, all were eagerly expecting his arrival. Every day the Ansars used to go out of the city, walking for miles on the road to Mecca, to give him a grand reception and every day they used to return disappointed. At last, he, their great master, arrived in the suburbs of Medina and made his first halt at a place called Quba which was three miles from the city. Many families from among the Ansar were living here and many of the emigrant Muslims also were put up here. The Prophet stopped here for fourteen days at the invitation of Amr-bin-Auf, the most distinguished of the Ansar. Muslims from the city began to flock here to meet the distinguished guest. Here Ali too joined his master after passing through terrible hardships for being in his bed at Mecca. The first mosque in the history of Islam was built here. Till then the Muslims in Medina as well as in Mecca used to offer their prayers in their houses. It is about this mosque that the Holy Quran speaks " Certainly a mosque founded on piety from the very first day is more deserving that you should stand in it; in it are men who love that they should be purified, and Allah loves those who purify themselves". (9:108). In the erection of this mosque, the Prophet also, along with his other companions, worked as an ordinary labourer. **Laborare est orare:** to labour is to pray. Work has got its dignity, true work is worship. What work can be more sacred than lending a helping hand in the construction of a house dedicated to God? The

Prophet thus gave a practical proof of the dignity and sacredness of work.

From this place the Prophet proceeded to Medina, and his entry into the city was like the triumphal entry of a monarch into his Capital after a great success. There was jubilation and enthusiasm everywhere, and all were in a happy holiday mood. Clad in their gayest garments, people came out to greet him, and when he entered the city women welcomed him from their house-tops, with chorus songs of praise. Everyone was naturally anxious to get the honour of having such a distinguished guest at his house, and it was therefore a delicate question for the Prophet to decide. So he let his camel go in a leisurely manner, and informed the eager crowd that he would decide to stop at the place where the animal would stop. So, the animal plodded on till she reached an open space in front of Abu Ayyub's house; she refused to go further. The open space of land belonged to two orphans and they offered it gratis to the Prophet, but he did not like to have it so, and the orphans had to accept a price from him for the same. To build a mosque here was the very first act of the Prophet. This then was the second mosque built by the earliest Muslims, and as in the construction of the mosque at Quba, here also the Prophet and his comrades worked like ordinary workmen. To all of them it was a labour of love and it was a proud privilege for them to work with the Prophet, praising in chorus the Lord of all creations thus: "O Lord! there is no felicity, but the felicity of the hereafter; O Lord! help the Helpers and the Refugees".

The mosque itself presented a sort of severe simplicity. The walls were of mud-bricks, and the roof was supported by the trunks of palm-trees, while their leaves and twigs made up the roof itself. A platform with a shed was raised in a corner of the courtyard for the residence of such of those who had no home or family, and they were known as the residents of **the Suffa** or platform. They spent their time in religious studies. Adjoining the mosque were created two special apartments for the Prophet and his family.

Thus we see that in spite of being so many years in Mecca, and in spite of its being the birth-place of the Prophet, Muslims were not able to build a mosque of their own; why, they were not even allowed to say their prayers publicly. But in Medina they were able to build a mosque as their first act and soon after the arrival of the Prophet. To the hot-bed conditions of Mecca, Medina offered an atmosphere of peace that was quite necessary for the propagation and preservation of Islam. Medina offered the most congenial soil for the growth of this new faith, as Mecca proved in sharp contrast the most uncongenial soil for it, which was threatened with disaster and destruction at every moment. It has been correctly said that a new era in the life of Islam started from Medina, and a new life and birth was given to it from there. In Mecca they were chased from post to pillar; themselves and their religion had to struggle hard for mere existence and they could not carry on their prayers peacefully even within the four walls of their houses. Now that they could say all their prayers

publicly, the question arose as to what should be the method to call the faithful to prayer five times a day at the fixed hours. A meeting was therefore called together to solve the problem; many suggestions were put forward. But a companion who had a dream in the previous night and who had in that dream seen a man and heard him saying, "God is great, God is great", and so on told of it to the Prophet. Omar too said that he had the same dream, and the Prophet therefore adopted this formula as the call (to be called out loudly by the 'Moazzin') for prayer at the fixed hours. The formula is "Allah is Greatest" (repeated four times), "I bear witness that nothing deserves to be worshipped but Allah" (repeated twice), "I bear witness that Mohammad is the Apostle of Allah" (repeated twice), "Come to prayers" (repeated twice), "Come to success" (repeated twice), "Allah is Greatest" (repeated twice), "There is no God but Allah". Thus we see that the Muslim Call for prayers is much better than the Christian bell and the temple gong; for, the latter neither show the essence nor speak of the greatness of prayers, while the Muslim Call for prayers shows the essence that Allah is Greatest, and calls on all the faithful to pray to Him and thus achieve success.

Having thus given a definite and regulated shape to his religion, the Prophet next turned his attention towards the emigrants who were there in a strange place, having sacrificed their all, home, happiness and wealth, for the sake of religion. They were in great need now, though they had all comforts in Mecca. So some tangible and definite arrangement must be made

for their welfare. The Prophet established a brotherhood between the Ansars and the emigrants..... "A brotherhood unique in the history of the world, and in respect of the sincerity of the fraternization", a brotherhood which bound each other in relationship stronger than that of blood. Each Helper or Ansar took a brother emigrant with him and placed half of his house at his entire disposal, effecting similar half and half division in all his goods, chattels, business concern, etc. The Medinites were an agricultural people, and they desired even to divide their farms equally but the emigrants being mainly tradesmen by profession, were not used to farming. The helpers, when informed of this fact, said that they were even ready and willing to manage the farming themselves, gladly dividing the yields equally. Not only that, they also made arrangements that after their deaths the property should be divided likewise, so much so that a brother-in-faith inherited the property of his Ansar brother, and not the brother-in-blood. It was really an overwhelming scene of ideal love, kindness, sympathy, selflessness and brotherhood—almost a unique solid-religious bond as already pointed out. Two people, who were till then, not only alien in race, but also in culture, religion and outlook, to be united in such a unique bond of brotherhood, is the glorious achievement of Islam. The history of no other religion, nay, the history of the world itself, shows no such example.

While the Helpers were thus ready to share with their new brothers-in-faith, the emigrants themselves were not eager to take undue advantage of such offers

of help. While the one party showed its nobility by a ready offering of help in all possible ways, the other party though, no doubt, sorely in need of help, exhibited its nobility tenfold and even hundredfold by avoiding such offers of help as far as possible, making the brotherhood most beautiful and ideal. It is the highest pinnacle of nobility, dignity and independence. Just see what one Abdur-Rahman-bin-Auf did when he was offered half of everything by a brother Ansar. Expressing his gratitude for the ready offer, he asked the latter to show him the way to the market, saying that he would then manage to make his own living, and in a short time he developed an increasing business. Similarly many others took to trade, preferring independent and honest living. This way many of the emigrant Muslims attained to flourishing conditions, and some of them even owned caravans of seven hundred camels. Such of those who could not carry on trade started working as potters, porters clerks, etc.

These people not only thus, by independent and honest means, maintained themselves honourably, but also contributed their quota towards the Bait-ul-Mal or the Public Treasury, to be expended on common welfare, relief, etc. There was a time in their life which was a time of acute want, when the Prophet had to ask a companion to entertain a guest. Once he asked Abu Talha to do so. The latter accordingly took the guest home. But on reaching there he found that there was nothing worth offering, and all that was there was even hardly enough for the children at home. "To avoid the awkward situation

light was put out, and whatever meal there was, was served to the guest, Abu Talha and his wife who had to bear him company as hosts, taking nothing but only showing by the movements of their hands and mouths, as though they were also partaking of the food". Such a time like this was followed, by the Grace of God, by a time of plenty. Both extremes brought out the best in them, acquitting themselves under all conditions admirably. They knew full well how to bear themselves with dignity and fortitude in times of adversity, and when prosperity came to them, then also they knew how to make a proper use of it. It reflects no small credit on Islam and the great personality behind it, for creating such followers of tried merit, of finely chiselled and polished character, and Islam was built up and nourished by such followers.

The Bait-ul-Mal, already referred to, is another institution peculiar to Islam. We see nowhere in the history of any other religion such thing instituted and worked out so thoroughly. The residents of the Suffa, from among whom followed the band of religious teachers who carried with them and spread the torch of learning wherever they went, were those who were maintained from this Bait-ul-Mal. Abu Hurairah, the well-known traditionalist, to whose energy and efforts we owe the sayings of the Holy Prophet, was one of the residents of the Suffa.

The Prophet next turned his attention to another important affair, namely, to establish friendly relations between the various tribes inhabiting in and around Medina. He was not satisfied with the brotherhood

that he established between the Muslims in Medina and the resident emigrant Muslims there. He wanted to effect further friendly relations between the Muslims and the non-Muslims, the Jews. He concluded a pact between the Aus and Khazraj who had now embraced Islam and the Jews. The terms were these:—(1) The Muslims and the Jews shall live as one people. (2) Each one of the party shall keep to its own faith, neither shall interfere with that of the other. (3) In the event of a war with a third party, each was bound to come to the assistance of the other, provided the latter were the party aggrieved, and not the aggressors. (4) In the event of an attack on Medina, both shall join hands to defend it. (5) Peace when desirable shall be made in cosultation of each other. (6) Medina shall be regarded as sacred by both, all bloodshed being forbidden there. (7) The Prophet shall be the final court of appeal in case of a dispute.

There is however one great and grave charge against Islam which I like to refute. It is that Islam became militant after its advent to Medina. The very terms of the pact as given above are in themselves a strong refutation of such a baseless charge; for, the terms show how the Prophet from the very beginning was anxious of having an atmosphere of peace and harmony in Medina. Those who level such a groundless charge are obviously those who want to misrepresent facts and misinterpret events to suit their prejudiced line of argument. As we have seen, the conditions under which Islam had to be in Mecca were entirely different from those conditions it had to

face while in Medina. In Mecca, they had no power worth the name; they were till then but silent and patient sufferers. Besides, bloodshed was against Islam, and the warfare it had to resort to was purely defensive in character. Finding no peace in Mecca, they left their home to go and settle somewhere, where they could have peace; but the Quraish who were bent upon their destruction even there, kept up their adamant attitude even though the latter had left Mecca and had come to Medina. We should not forget that in Medina the Muslims had to devise means for their conduct towards others inhabiting there, and their number was also growing. If we look at the history of the evolution of society, we see that the rules and regulations were adopted according to the growing needs. The fact that Islam did not approve of bloodshed is amply proved by the various arrangements that the Prophet made for the friendly relationship between the various tribes, in Medina. Look at his friendly attitude towards the Jews and their religion. The cry that Islam was forced at the point of sword is as mischievous as it is wrong. The taking up of arms was not to propagate the faith, but to defend it and its followers from the enemies. So long as they were in Mecca, they did not have the strength and opportunity to assert their rights by the use of arms and to defend themselves likewise. The instinct of self-preservation is as natural to man as breathing for existence; therefore, to fight for self-existence does not mean that Islam and sword are synonymous. All religions, all governments, all people, have the right to fight for protection. If, therefore, Islam did the same, where is the harm and how can it be blamed on that score?

Even Jesus Christ styled the Prince of Peace insisted on his followers to buy swords. In the later history of Christianity, we see that force was not only used for self-protection, but also for the slaughter of those whose religion was different, or whose beliefs (though the religion was the same) were different from the Church of Rome. If there is any instance in the history of Islam where a ruler forced religion at the point of sword, blame for that cannot be laid at the door of Islam. Islam became militant in Medina, not because of any calculated policy, but because of dire necessity. Islam could not be militant, because of policy; for, the Prophet declared that, "He who is not affectionate to God's creatures and to his own children would not receive the affection of God". (Abu Hurairah.) He taught to be charitable in speech, deed, thought and action. "Charity of the tongue", says Irving, "the most important and least cultivated of charities, was likewise earnestly inculcated by Mahomet". A religion that teaches to keep the finer feelings of humanity in the forefront cannot be aggressive. Islam was supremely patient, but when the bitter animosity of the Jews, their violation of solemn engagements, their sedition and their betrayals became dangers, God ordered: "Defend yourself against your enemies, but attack them not first: God hateth the aggressors". (2:190).

The use of sword by the Muslims was purely in self-defense and the history of no other religion affords an example like it. Muslims never used sword for the propagation of their faith, (I challenge anybody to show me an instance when the Prophet

used sword, or force, or compulsion, for the promulgation of his faith) while on the other hand, history tells of many instances of frightful wars waged by the Jews, the Christians and the gentle Parsis. In the case of Jews, the force and compulsion were sanctioned by religion, and in the case of early Christians, the teachings of the Prophet of Nazareth were soon forgotten for the pride of power. "From the moment Christianity became a recognised force", writes an able writer, "it became aggressive and persecuting". "The name of religion" writes another writer, "served as the plea and justification of aggression upon weaker nations; to lead to their spoilation and enslavement". Thus we see that every act of violation was sanctified by the Church, while, "in the case of extreme iniquity absolution paved the criminal's way to heaven". From the slaughter by Charlemagne, with the full sanction of the Church, to the massacre and enslavement of the weakest races in America, there is an unbroken record of Christian aggressiveness. "Persecution", writes Hallam, "is the deadly original sin of the Reformed Church, that which cools every honest man's zeal for their cause, in proportion as his reading became more expansive". Thus we see that the Reformed Church too failed, but only adopted the policy of aggression of the Old Church.

In the history of religions as well as individuals, except in Islam, we see that the spirit of toleration is preached and insisted only as long as they have been powerless, which spirit gave way to intolerance and persecution the moment they attained power. Till the

time of the conversion of Constantine, Christianity was weak, and in consequence remained passive, but from the moment of the conversion of Constantine, it became safe from molestation. From this moment began a system of religious persecution unparalleled in conception. "From the very moment", writes Lecky, "the church obtained civil power under Constantine, the general principle of coersion was admitted and acted on, both against the Jews, the heretics, and the pagans". Another Author writes: "Father after father wrote about the holiness of persecution. One of the greatest saints of the Church, 'a saint of the most tender and exquisite piety', supplied arguments for the most atrocious persecution".

Later on in the fifteenth century, the Pope allotted the non-Christian world equally to the Portuguese and the Spaniards, with absolute power to effect conversion by whatever means they liked. History affords ample instances to show how freely they construed the permission and started an era of persecution, for, had not the Master said: "Compel them to come in". I can multiply instances after instances to show that Christianity did not only preach and sanction persecution, but did it in a way that the mere thought of their instruments and devices of torture makes one's blood cold with extreme horror. Yet, the followers of this religion have the temerity and impudence to say that Islam became militant since its advent in Medina. Yes! Islam did become militant in so far as it was necessary to fight for self-preservation. The Prophet showed by example the spirit of tolerance that he fought. To all conquered

nations, it afforded liberty of worship. Promulgation of the sword was contrary to the tests of the Holy Prophet, and the Quran had forbidden it. "There is no compulsion in religion". (2:258).

Islam never tolerated the spirit of aggression; it was always ready to say to its enemies: "Cease hostilities, be our allies, and we shall be faithful to you or pay tribute, and we will secure and protect you in all your rights, or adopt our religion, and you shall enjoy every privilege we ourselves possess". But the very simple and honest statement was, much made use of, by the critics to prove that Islam employed force and that it dictated conditions that were impracticable. One writer went so far as to say that people converted themselves to Islam to save life and property. I see in this statement nothing that tells of the insecurity of life or property. These were the best terms that Islam offered; there is absotutely no threat of compulsion, or taking of life, or confiscating of property. It states in plain terms,—cease hostility and we will be friendly neighbours, or pay a tribute as a cost of protecting your life and property, or embrace our religion and enjoy the full rights. Can there be any better terms? Was there ever a religion or a nation which offered such equitable terms to the enemy? We see to-day in the case of different governments that they do not allow people of other nations to acquire citizenship rights until they are naturalised. Muslims were paying certain taxes, and otherwise contributing to the exchequer. It would have been great injustice to provide from this money others; similarly it was impossible to tax the

others likewise. Therefore, for them a special tax, which is in all cases less than the usual tax, was levied for their protection; and as to the last term, there is absolutely no threat or coersion in it. The Muslim laws of war are admittedly more human than those of any other religion. Read this: "And fight for the religion of God against those who fight against you; but transgress not (by attacking them first) for Allah loveth not the transgressors". (2:257).

Regarding Christianity and its ethics about warfare, Kwaja Kamal-ud-Din, in his book, "The Ideal Prophet", says thus: "Every student of the Gospel knows that there are hopeless contradictions in the teaching of Jesus as to the use of the sword. Had there been some actions of Jesus to explain his precepts, the history of Christendom would have been different. The pulpit, on the other side, has always been subservient to statecraft. The clergy further the ends of the state rather than guard the conscience of the people. They read homilies of war when the state wants war, as did the Bishop of London in 1918 at the Marble Arch, but they lay special stress on the Sermon on the Mount when the time has come for the sword to return to the scabbard. Humility, meekness, forgiveness, and non-resistence to evil are some of the claimed ethics of Christianity, but her history discloses quite a different chapter. There we find heartless, sanguinary persecution of others, want of charity and lack of kindliness. Had there been actions of the Master, translating his precepts, the love of his followers for him would at least have actuated them to follow his actions".

While religious wars and religious persecutions have blackened many a chapter in European history, it may be pointed out that the Prophet on the other hand, always preached and practised toleration, allowing to all full freedom of conscience in religious matters. "We do not read of persecutions of Galileos, Latimers and others in the annals of Islam". Mohammad respected other religions, protecting the life and property of those who followed other religions. This could not possibly be his attitude if he wanted to propagate his religion by the sword. Read the following:–"To the Christians of Nazreth and the surrounding territories the security of God and the pledge of His Prophet are extended for their lives, their religion and their property–the present as well as the absent, and others besides; there shall be no interference with (the practice of) their faith or their observances; nor any change in their rights or privileges; no bishop shall be removed from his bishopric, nor any monk from his monastery, nor any priest from his priesthood, and they shall continue to enjoy everything, great and small, as heretofore; **no image or cross shall be destroyed: they shall not oppress nor be oppressed: they shall not practise the rights of blood-vengeance as in the Days of Ignorance: no titles shall be levied from them, nor shall they be required to furnish provisions for the troops".** (Syed Ameer Ali, 'Spirit of Islam'.)

Similar concessions extended to the Zoroastrians also clearly prove the extremely tolerant attitude of the Prophet–not certainly the attitude of one who wanted to thrust into others his religion at the point of

the sword. The following few extracts from the letter of the Prophet to the head of a fire-temple will speak for themselves:–"This is my letter: Verily upon him (Farrukh b. Shaksan, the head of the fire-temple) is in the protection of God, also upon his sons, with regard to their lives, property in the lands in which they live, plains or hills; as well as freedom of use of the wells and pastures which they possess. They must not be treated unjustly or oppressed. And those to whom this my letter will be read must protect them, (the Zoroastrians) leave them free, and prevent the offences from others, and not show hostility to them by insult or by using force..... They are entirely in their possessions of fire-temples as well as the landed and other property attached to the latter. No one also should restrict them in the use of rich dress, the use of stirrups, construction of buildings or stables, performing burials, or observing anything which is accepted in their religion or sects. They must be treated better than all other (Non-Muhammadan) people under protection".

All the Caliphs had closely followed in the footsteps of the Prophet, granting tolerance to their non-Muslim subjects, Christians, Parsis, etc. This is not the way of the sword. Read the following, a charter granted by Muktafi II, Caliph of Baghdad, to the Nestorian Church. It is addressed to the Nestorian Patriarch. It says "Thy life and property and those of thy people will be protected, great care will be taken in the promotion of your welfare; your ways of interring your dead will be respected, and your Churches and monasteries will be protected. In all

this we are in conformity with the method adopted, by the orthodox Caliphs with your predecessors". Again, the memorable words of the Nestorian Patriarch Isho' Yahb III, are worth quoting. He says:—"The Arabs to whom God has given at this time the government of the world.....do not persecute the Christian religion; on the contrary, they favour it, honour our priests and the saints of the Lord, and confer benefits on Churches and monasteries".

The very ideal life and character of the Holy Prophet is by itself a positive proof of the uniform tolerant attitude of Islam towards other religions, and it is a sheer irony that the followers of a religion, with all sorts of persecutions full to its credit, should falsely accuse Islam of propagation through the sword. Mohammad, the Prophet was the ideal embodiment of such virtues as kindness, mercy, sympathy, patience, tolerance, and forgiveness. He left unharmed even his worst and deadliest enemies. It was the moral excellence of his character and teaching that triumphed in the end, that brought many adherents to his religion. His final victory over Mecca and its people was not surely a military success. It was a great moral and religious triumph. Was it a victory of the sword? The deeply significant victory hurls to the wind the malicious sword theory. Allah's faith could not and cannot but triumph. The whole of Mecca lay prostrate before him. Did he even then use his power, compelling people to embrace his faith? No! not at all. Read this:—"Although the city had cheerfully accepted his authority, all its inhabitants had not yet embraced the new religion, nor formally

acknowledged his prophetic claim. Perhaps he intended to follow the course he had pursued at Medina, and leave the conversion of the people to be gradually accomplished without compulsion". This is a clear defence from no less a person than Sir William Muir.

"Thus, he (the Holy Prophet) preached a religious toleration that had never been known to the world before.....If religious tolerance must be a necessary article of faith in the Religion of Humanity, it is surely another cogent justification for Mohammad's claim to the name of the Ideal Prophet".

"In the day when Allah gathereth together the messengers, and saith: What was your response (from mankind)? they say: We have no knowledge. Lo! Thou, only Thou are the Knower of Things Hidden. When Allah saith: O Jesus, son of Mary! Remember My favour unto thee and unto thy mother; how I strengthened thee with the holy Spirit, so that thou speakest unto mankind in the craddle as in maturity; and how I taught thee the Scripture and Wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel; and how thou didst shape of clay as it were the likeness of a bird by My permission, and didst blow upon it and it was a bird by My permission, and thou didst heal him who was born blind and the leper by My permission; and how thou didst raise the dead, by My permission; and how I restrained the Children of Israel from (harming) thee when thou camest unto them with clear proofs, and those of them who disbelieved exclaimed: This is naught else than mere magic".

—KORAN: CHAPTER V: 109–110.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BATTLE OF BADR.

AS the preceding chapters clearly show, the early Muslim history in Mecca is a very sad and gloomy record, full of the basest and the most inhuman atrocities of the Quraish. There is a limit to human suffering and fortitude, though inhuman atrocities may know no limits of any kind or degree. Hence the Muslims first migrated to Abyssinia which was a Christian Kingdom, and the rest afterwards betook themselves to Medina. Even the Prophet could not but leave the place, and he left the place intime, arriving safe with his friend, Abu Bakr, in Medina protected by Divine hand from the enemies' cruel clutches.

There followed a new era of peace and prosperity for the Muslims in Medina. Mosques were erected, the call to prayer was definitely regulated, and all had the freedom to follow the faith unmolested. Harmonious and friendly relations existed between the Muslims and the non-Muslims, the Jews, and there was the ideal and perfect brotherhood between the emigrant Muslims and the Medinite Muslims. The Muslims were thus in quite a different atmosphere in Medina, peaceful, happy, and prosperous, growing in power and influence day by day. The Prophet had already become a great and leading personality in Medina, so much so that he seemed to eclipse one Abdullah-bin-Ubayy who was all in all there before

the advent of the Prophet. Abdulla-bin-Ubayy was naturally stung with jealousy and hatred towards the Prophet and his followers. Here was the beginning of the trouble in Medina, and we shall see how the Muslims were, after all, even in Medina, interrupted in their life of peace and prosperity. Their days of peace and prosperity were brief and short-lived.

The Quraish, who were watching with increased anxiety and hatred the growing prosperity of the Muslims in Medina, were determined to devise measures to put down such growing strength and influence of the Muslims there. Did they not pursue right up to the court of the King for those who emigrated for safety to Abyssinia? To carry on the work for them, they had already the right man in Medina who was none else but Abdullah-bin-Ubayy. They knew his hostile attitude towards the Prophet and his men. So they tried to get the Muslims exiled from Medina through his influence and power. But already many from his own tribe had embraced Islam, and Abdullah was afraid to turn out the Muslims, as it would most probably lead to his own people turning against him. Thus finding that their attempt through Abdullah was of no avail, the Quraish next turned to the people living between Mecca and Medina; these people were of importance and were respected by the whole of Arabia as they were the custodians of the sacred house of the Kaba. The Quraish, therefore, started exciting them against the Muslims. Meanwhile, Abdullah-bin-Ubayy was not keeping idle in Medina. In secret he had set a deep feeling of opposition in motion. Despite the fact it was not safe to place too

much confidence in the Jews. At any moment, they may turn against the Muslims and may prove treacherous. So, there were enemies within and without. The Muslims were once more in danger, hemmed in by enemies from all sides. They were in constant fear of being attacked any moment from within as well as from without, from beyond the four walls of Medina. The Quraish were now quite prepared; they were eager to come to a clash against the Muslims, and were anxiously on the look out for an opportunity to pick up a quarrel. They started sending men out in small numbers right up to the walls of Medina, to inspect the country, and if possible to cause trouble also. The Muslims realised that sooner or later they would be compelled to face war. It was then that the Holy Prophet received Divine revelation, permitting the use of sword in self-defence. About this the Holy Quran says thus:— "Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, and do not transgress the limits of war". (2:190). It also adds: "Permission is granted to those against whom war is waged, because they have been tyrannised". (22:39).

Divine revelation having thus cleared their doubt as to what ought to be the Muslims' attitude towards their enemies, the Prophet thought that it would be wiser, under the circumstances, to be forearmed in all ways to meet the impending crisis, taking such precautions as were extremely necessary. As a first step, the Prophet sent out small reconnaissance parties to keep an eye on the movements of the Quraish in the neighbourhood, to get correct and

minute information about their plans, etc., and to establish friendly relations with other tribes in the vicinity of Medina, so that they may not be drawn to the enemies' side, for, they would be a great help to them in times of need. A few tribes entered into Agreement with the Muslims; but those agreements were purely for their own safety, for, the terms of most of them were to the effect that they would come to the help of the Muslims on condition that should some enemy attack them they would be assisted by the Muslims. For instance, read the following agreement: "This is the script of Mohammad to the Banu Hamza. Their life and property shall be safe. Should some enemy attack them, they shall be assisted by the Muslims, unless it is a religious war. They shall also come to the Prophet's help when called upon." The Muslims continued going out in small parties in order to gather as much information concerning the enemy as possible. Each party was sent out with a strict prohibition from the Prophet from picking quarrel with anyone. If the Quraish were anxious to come to war, they would have to be the aggressive party, the first to start. It was quite essential for the Muslims to be thus on their guard, to take such precautionary measures as mentioned above. For, these would act as a strong check against the excessive aggression of the enemy. And there was another strong cause deterring the enemy from making an in-road upon Medina. They did not take that hasty and hazardous step. Because, Medina lay on the trade route between Mecca and Syria, and strained relations with the Muslims would certainly jeopardise their trade; their caravans had to pass

through Medina on the way to Syria and back on their return to Mecca. So, any obstruction caused to the Muslims would entail obstruction of their trade route. They, the Quraish, could not but take into serious account such things, however anxious they might be for taking vengeance on the Muslims in Medina.

Despite all precautions, one wrong and unwise step on the part of the Muslims, which the enemy magnified into a big and serious cause, soon landed them in a war. The following incident led up to it: In the month of Jamadi II, 2 A.H., a few men were sent out for reconnaisance under the leadership of Abdullah-bin-Jahash. They were given a sealed cover (which contained instructions) by the Prophet and the contents of which were to be read only after a lapse of two days. Accordingly, after two days, Abdullah opened the cover which contained instructions that the party were to proceed to Nakhla where they could get some information regarding the scheme of the Quraish. Reaching Nakhla, they came across a few Quraish (who were traders) on their way back from Syria. On seeing them, Abdullah-bin-Jahash completely lost his head, and going against the strict orders of the Prophet, he fell upon them, killing one Abdullah-bin-Hadrami and taking two others as captives. On hearing about this transgression, the Prophet was, it is needless to say, much grieved, and he severely took Abdullah to task for his unwarranted action. He knew quite well that the Quraish had at last obtained the needed loop-hole for beginning their attack on the Muslims, and to give full vent to their pent-up hatred, wrath and vengeance. The incident by itself was not

its nature so grave and provocative, but it was enough to fan the flame of hatred towards the Muslims. Thus the Battle of Badr came out. After two months of preparations, the Quraish army fell upon Medina in the month of Ramadhan in 2 A.H.

Just during this time, by a most unfortunate coincidence, a trading caravan belonging to the Quraish and led by Abu Sufyan, was on its way back from Syria. Abu Sufyan had sent word to Mecca that he urgently wanted protection, though he was quite aware that the caravan was in no danger at all. On receiving his message, the Quraish in Mecca came to the unwarranted and entirely wrong conclusion that the Muslims were preparing to attack the caravan. Of course, there was no truth in this, for, the message was sent before the caravan's departure from Syria; it had passed through Medina, safe and unmolested. But the Quraish found in this another excuse for war. They never used this incident anyhow to excite their people's hatred, but they harped upon, for obvious reasons, the murder of Abdullah-bin-Hadrami. The real cause of the battle was evidently the great anxiety of the Quraish to entirely stamp out the steadily growing power of Islam. In fact, the Muslims were dragged into it, and they had to face the enemy in sheer self-defence, though they were in all ways quite unprepared for it.

Though the Quraish approached Medina with a view of attacking the City, the Prophet thought it best to meet the enemy outside, instead of letting the city be attacked. This meant that he would have to do

without the help of the Ansars or Helpers, for, the terms of the agreement were that they were to help the Muslims only within the four walls of Medina. But when the Holy Prophet stated his plans to them, they were ready to follow his lead and help him, ready to undergo the severest trials. The Muslim army in which were mere boys even, besides the Ansars, was only 313 strong, poorly equipped and ill-prepared. We have noted how they were dragged into a battle. The Quran depicts their state of mind thus:—"A Party of the believers were surely averse.... As if they were being driven to death". (8:5). When it meant a life and death struggle for their very religion, when the most precious thing was at stake, there was no other alternative but to face the relentless enemy. The small army marched out of the city of Medina to meet the Quraish.

They marched until they reached Badr, (the place was so-called after a well of the same name) where they found the enemy encamped. The Muslims to their great dismay found that they were in no way a match for the Quraish army which numbered a thousand strong, well-organised and well equipped. They were nowhere near them in number, strength or skill. The very number was enough to stun them, to discourage their spirit. The situation caused the deepest anxiety in the Prophet himself. He was much anxious for his small band of Muslims and Ansars who must fight against overwhelming odds. Retiring into the small hut that was specially set up for him, relying solely on the mercy of Allah, he poured out to Him, with tearful

eyes, these words: "O Allah, shouldst Thou suffer this small band of believers to perish this day, no one will be left on earth to worship Thee and carry Thy message to the world". After praying to Allah, the Holy Prophet felt greatly relieved; he came out of the hut smiling; joining his followers, he recited aloud verses from the Holy Quran. He was assured of victory through Divine revelation which said thus:– "Soon shall the hosts be routed and they shall turn their backs". (54:45). Only Divine help can be ascribed as the cause for the unexpected, miraculous victory that followed.

The enemy were quite confident that they would be able to wipe out the Muslims in no time and without any serious effort. According to the instruction of the Holy Prophet, the Muslims kept back without advancing for an attack. After a while, the Quraish sent out there three men, and three Muslims went to meet them. For, in the olden days, it was the custom among the Arabs to try first single-handed combats before the commencement of a regular battle between the opposing armies. The Quraish thought that at last the day had come for them to take vengeance on their enemies to their heart's content, and conditions were all, no doubt, in their favour. They knew they were over three times the number of the Muslim army; besides being fully equipped, they were skilled and well-trained soldiers, while the poor Muslim army, some of them, boys, and most of them knowing nothing of warfare, was poorly armed and many of them were in rags. To the mighty Quraish they looked like a flock of sheep waiting to be butchered.

The three Muslims advanced to meet the Quraish, expecting never to see their companions again, but it so happened that the three Quraish were slain. A few single combats followed, and a few more were slain; and then the battle became general. It was a proof of the undiluted love that the Muslims had for Islam; for father faught against son and uncle against nephew. The Holy Prophet went amidst his men, encouraging and helping them. Amir, a very young boy, whom the Prophet did not want to venture into the fight, but who was bent upon fighting, said to the Prophet, "No! nothing can stand between me and Heaven;" with these words he went into the very thick of the battle and was killed.

The Quraish fell upon the Muslims; the wonderful battle scene that followed was a positive proof of Divine help. The poor Muslims did not budge an inch from their position, repulsing the enemy one after another. Mostly all their chiefs and many prominent men among the Quraish were slain; the rest of the army, seeing all their leaders killed, were in a state of utter confusion, and they turned and fled. The Muslims went after them and captured seventy. In all, fourteen among the Muslims were killed, eight of them being Ansars, while of the enemy, seventy were killed, and seventy were taken prisoners. Abu Jahal was among the slain. Thus the battle of Badr came to a victorious end. It was not the ordinary sort of battle with the ordinary sort of victory for mere physical strength. It was a glorious spiritual victory. Over whelming might and strength were pitched against extreme weakness; but righteousness

armed with marvellous and matchless Divine help converted all weakness into an unconquerable strength. The enemy with all its numbers, were lacking in the most fundamental thing, the proper incentive and motive to fight. They had only the spirit of vengeance and hatred in them. But a high spiritual ideal, itself, an invincible though invisible strength, was throughout guiding the small army of the Muslims. There was the Divine hand of Allah behind, and there was the mighty, magnetic personality, the Holy Prophet, in the very thick of the fight, infusing confidence and strength into every soul. It was really a wonderful battle, with a wonderful victory. Regarding this, the Holy Quran itself says thus: "Indeed there was a sign for you in the two hosts which met together in encounter; one party fighting in the way of Allah, and the other unbelieving.....and Allah strengthens with His aid whom He pleases: most surely there is a lesson in this for those who have eyes to see". (3:12).

But what makes the battle of Badr so strikingly unique is the fact that every form of weakness on one side is ranged against every form of strength on the other. The Quraish army is three times as large as the Muslim one. The positions taken up by the Quraish is advantageous. Their ranks comprise soldiers of fame, with whom fighting has been a life-long profession. Equipment too is more than ample. Everyone is clad in full armour. They have a hundred horsemen as well as seven hundred camels. And what is the Muslim strength? Their number is one third of the enemy army. Their ranks

are composed of a number of under-age youths. Refugees of advanced age, and of some Medinite Helpers, in no way a match for the war-like Meccans. What is the number of horsemen and camels they can boast of? No more than two and seventy respectively. In respect of equipment, they have no comparison at all. Thus utter weakness is pitched against overwhelming might.

I must state here, that during the battle, when the fight was at its height, the Holy Prophet with tears streaming down his eyes, was praying to God to help the helpless and wounded among the Muslims as well as the enemy. At the same time, on the opposite side, Abu Jahal, it is said, was praying to God to destroy the Muslims. Another interesting incident is, that the Quraish army, before leaving Mecca to attack the Muslims, went to the sacred house of Kaba and prayed that God might grant victory to those who were in the right. They were so sure that the Muslims would be defeated. Thus, the battle of Badr was the judgment of God. To those in the right, He gave Divine support, and they succeeded, while those in the wrong, were slain and shattered. The success of the Muslims in the Battle of Badr had a starting effect on the many neighbouring tribes. That the puny and powerless Muslim army managed to overpower the overwhelmingly mighty Quraish army, was a great marvel to them. This set them thinking, and they came to the right conclusion that the Muslims were helped by some Supreme Being; after that, many among them embraced Islam. So, the net result of the battle of Badr was that the strength of the Muslims and their

cause were considerably augmented, registering another definite stage in the steady progress of Islam. On the other hand, the boasted power of the Quraish received a serious set-back. That the most deadly and inveterate enemies of Islam, Abu Jahal being one of them, were all slain during the battle, also points out a moral, showing how God punished those enemies of Islam.

The prisoners taken by the Muslims were treated with exemplary kindness, exhibiting in a tangible manner the true nobility and magnanimity behind Islamic religion. The captives were so much impressed by this rare noble spirit that many of them later embraced Islam-not conversions at the point of sword, but, voluntary conversions through the sheer exhibition of the moral excellence of the faith. Many poor prisoners were freely set at liberty and many were set free on the receipt of a small ransom. Those who were learned were asked to instruct ten children, and were then given their liberty. "To forego a big sum of 4000 Dirhams as ransom money per head and accept the teaching of reading and writing instead, furnishes an ample testimony to the value which learning had in the eyes of the Prophet". Very often the captives were given the best food to eat while the Muslims were content with plain dates. Not a single foe received the least harsh treatment at the hands of the Prophet, and even the bitterest enemy received nothing but the best treatment at his hands. The following incident will clearly illustrate this particular point. One man of position, who had done his best in Mecca to injure the cause of

Islam, and who had misused his gift of eloquence in abusing Islam and in arousing opposition against it, was brought before the Prophet, and someone suggested to the Prophet the knocking out of two of the teeth of the Meccan orator as an appropriate punishment, so that he may not further carry on his oratorical battle against Islam. But what did the Prophet reply? "If I disfigure any of his limbs, God will disfigure mine", was his characteristic reply.

Ordinary human nature under the circumstances, guided by the ordinary ethics of warfare, would have, with sufficient justifiability and reasonableness, suggested quite a different treatment for those Meccan captives. Considering what all untold sufferings and persecutions were undergone by the Muslims in Mecca, ultimately forcing them to take refuge in places like Abyssinia and Medina, leaving behind their dear native city, and considering that they were not even left alone even in their new places, which fact was quite evident from the event, the battle of Badr, here was the first opportunity afforded to the Muslims, if they chose, to wreak vengeance to their hearts' content on their enemies who were captives under them. From the battle of Badr right up to the historic conquest and triumphant entry into Mecca, the Prophet and his followers were guided by the same ideal and noble spirit, devoid of the least tinge of revenge or hatred ever against the bitterest enemy. The Prophet's high standard of ethics and morality in warfare is a glorious and imperishable chapter by itself, and this unchallenged noble spirit, breathing through Islam and its followers, shone only more and

more when tried by trying wars, naturally drawing towards it more and more adherants, and converting even the most implacable oppositionists into wonderful followers afterwards. Is this the way of spreading the faith at the point of the sword? On the other hand, does not an unbiassed and proper understanding of these purely defensive wars establish the simple truth that Islam spread in spite of the sword, through its imperishable and intrinsic merit that creditably withstood all severe tests and trials? But there is no remedy for studied perversion and blind obstinacy. So, let us proceed to the next chapter.

1. "The greatest Jehad (Holy War) is that for the conquest of self.

2. The Lord regardeth not a prayer in which the heart doth not accompany the body.

3. Withhold your hands from striking and from taking that which is unlawful and bad.

4. The best of you before God and His creation are those who are best in their own families, and I am the best of my family.

5. Envy and suspicion disintegrate society.

6. Keep yourselves far from envy, for it eateth up and taketh away good actions, like as fire eateth up and burneth wood".

—MOHAMMAD.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BATTLE OF UHUD.

VERILY Allah assisted you at Badr, while you were weak." (3:122) And so the small and ill-equipped Muslim army was able to perform the miracle which resulted in a crushing defeat for the proud and mighty Quraish army. But such a crushing defeat and the unexpected decisive victory for the enemy did only intensify and deepen the spirit of hatred and revenge in the hearts of the Quraish. It was a great blow to their pride that such a small army of ill-equipped men and boys were able to conquer them so completely. As they fled from the field of Badr, they called out to the Muslims that they would come back again the next year to avenge their dead, and in consequence, revenge became the watch-word all over Mecca. The Quraish, having lost all their leaders at the battle of Badr, entrusted the lead to Abu Sufyan who swore he would not rest until he had his full revenge on the Muslims. Throughout the years, the Meccans were busy preparing afresh a mightier and a better equipped force to meet the enemy. It was agreed that all profits accruing to them from commerce etc., should be utilised in the preparation of the contemplated expedition.

Abu Sufyan immediately set about in collecting an army; not being content with the Quraish men alone, he endeavoured to secure suitable help as well, and

by the end of the year, he succeeded in collecting an army of 3,000 soldiers, including two hundred armed cavalry, and seven hundred well-armed and skilled heroes. He also took women in the army, so that they would rouse the spirit of the soldiers by their war-songs. Thus arrayed, the mighty army marched towards Medina in the year 3 A.H., and on Thursday the 9th of Shawwal, they encamped three miles from Medina, at the foot of the hill called Uhud. Bent upon complete destruction, they not only cut down all crops in the fields, but also let loose their camels and horses to graze on them and thus destroying as much as possible. When the Holy Prophet heard of such unwarranted and wanton destructions, he summoned together his companions to discuss about the grave situation and to adopt the best plans to meet the same. This preliminary war council took place on Friday, the 10th of Shawwal.

In that council, he related some of the visions that he had a few days back. In these visions he saw that his sword was a bit broken; this portended some injury to himself. Again he saw his body covered with a coat of mail; this meant that they should not venture outside the walls of Medina. In another he saw many cows being killed, pointing out danger and damage to his people. The Prophet then decided not to go outside Medina to meet the enemy as they had done at the Battle of Badr, but to remain within its four walls, following the warning through the vision. Those among his companions who were elder in age and wisdom agreed with his decision, but the youthful and hot-headed among them, as but natural—"a hot

temper leaps over a cold decree"—wished to go out and fight the enemy openly. They argued that staying with in Medina would naturally give the enemy the impression that they were weak and that they were consequently afraid to fight with the enemy. As the majority were of this opinion, the holy Prophet, yielded to their wishes, and went in to put on his armour, making the necessary preparations for their departure. It was even argued that they could not watch silent and unheaded, as self-respecting citizens, their fields and pastures so mercilessly devastated by the enemy. The Prophet with his army marched out of Medina at sunset. The party was thousand strong, there being only hundred armed men and two horsemen in all. They spent the night at a place not far from the city, resuming their march at dawn the next morning. On seeing the enemy, Abdullah-bin-Ubay, who had embraced Islam after the battle of Badr, deserted the Muslims with his three hundred men. Thus, this desertion reduced the strength of the Muslim army to seven hundred, and most of these were unskilled in warfare. The only strength or power left in them was their zeal and enthusiasm to defend truth at any cost. This spirit worked with equal force in the hearts of all, old and young alike, rejuvenating the old and invigorating even the tender ones. An under-aged boy, it is said, was refused enlistment. But he was so eager to fight with others that he went before the Prophet and stretched himself and stood on tip-toes to look taller; the Prophet in the end allowed him to enlist. Seeing this, another little boy came forward; he said he was very strong and added he could wrestle with another bigger than himself

and throw him down; he was allowed therefore to prove his assertion, and after that he too was allowed to enlist. A very old man came to the Prophet and said: "I am, O Prophet of Allah, already on the verge of my grave. What a glory, should my life come to an end while striking a blow in the defence of Allah's Apostle"! Thus we see again that in this battle as in the previous one, the Muslim army consisted of many old men and young boys; they had not the military skill, but only that intense spiritual fervour and these advanced bravely to fight against three thousand strong and skilled warriors.

The Prophet, like a skilled and born general, took up a convenient and advantageous position, with the rocks of Uhud to protect the rear, and he himself arranged the ranks. Only on one side there was a gap through the rocks, and there was the danger of an attack from the enemy that way. The Prophet, observing the importance of this, posted fifty archers there with strict orders not to leave the post on any account, irrespective of the fact whether the Muslim army were to succeed or not.

As to the army of the Quraish, I have stated that Abu Sufyan was selected the leader; he broke his ranks into detachments, and gave the command of each detachment to a separate person, he himself taking up a central position near the camel which had "Hubul" (meaning the greatest God) on it. Besides the women who were there to rouse the men with their war-songs, there was a Christian monk and poet, Abu Amir, who also undertook to awaken the spirit of

the fighters. He was formerly an inhabitant of Medina where he had wielded great power and commanded great reverence owing to his spiritual and abstenious life. But later, he left Medina on the arrival of the Prophet; for it was a great blow to him to see the reverence and homage that was once given to him, now transferred to the prophet. He went to Mecca where he could hope to wield better influence and power. He thaught that his very presence amidst the Quraish army was quite enough to make the Medinites desert the Muslims. So, after the arrangement of the ranks, he stepped out and reminded the Helpers among the Muslims who he was, but he was received with contempt, and was forced to withdraw.

As usual, there were the rounds of duels before the battle proper began, and in these Ali and Hamza killed many of the enemy. Talah, the flag-bearer on the Quraish side, fell at the hands of Hamza. Then the Muslims fell furiously upon the enemy. Ali, Hamza and Abu Dujana displayed great valour, inflicting crushing losses on the enemy. Each time as they fell on the enemy, they caused great havoc among the ranks, dealing death-blows on all sides. Hinda, Abu Sufyan's wife, was there, the bitterest enemy of the Muslims, especially of Hamza. She bribed a negro slave, named Wahshi, to kill him at the first opportunity. He took Hamza unaware and killed him with his javelin. She thought that by the fall of Hamza the Muslims would lose heart, and that in consequence they would lose the battle as well. But the course of the battle proved how she was entirely wrong in her conjecture, for after this, the

Muslims fought more desparately. Seven of the Meccan flag-bearers fell one after another; and a good number of their skilled warriors met the same fate. The Quraish were seized with utter confusion and panic, since so many of their brave ones were so unexpectedly slain, and they took to flight, closely pursued by the Muslims. Once more the Muslims were on the point of scoring another glorious and famous victory over the Meccans; but the whole game was unfortunately spoiled by the archers who were posted at the vulnerable point where an attack from the enemy was rightly apprehended. These archers, quite against the strict orders of the Prophet not to leave their station at any cost, seeing the Meccans put to flight and believing the Muslims to be victorious, unwisely left their posts and joined in the pursuit. Of course, Abdullah-bin-Jubair who had the command of the cavalry of the Quraish army did not fail to observe the weak position so created by the Muslims. He turned round to the rear with his two hundred men and fell upon the Muslim army, sweeping the few archers who were still guarding the gap. This gave heart to the fleeing Meccans, who seeing Khalid attack the scattered Muslims from the rear, stopped in their flight, and turning round also pressed upon the Muslims who were thus hemmed in and attacked from both sides. But for a precautionary measure taken beforehand by the Prophet to meet such an unexpected reverse, the Muslim army would have been thoroughly crushed by the enemy with their overwhelming number. The particularly advantageous position with the mountains at the back, was chosen by the Prophet, so that there might be a place of

shelter in case of a disaster. While his army was pursuing the enemy, he himself, with Talha and Saad, was keeping aloof behind. He saw Khalid sweeping down on his men through the gap deserted by the archers, and he at once realised the grave danger to which they were exposed. Two courses of action were now open before him, and they were, either to be taken himself to a place of shelter, leaving his army to its fate, or to risk his life, calling out to his men to make them aware of the danger. It is needless to say that to the Prophet, the former course of seeking his safety alone at the expense of his men, was something unthinkable and out of question. It was not in his nature at all. So he shouted aloud to his men thus: "Rally to me, I am the Apostle of Allah." Hearing the Prophet's voice, the Muslims immediately turned round to return to him, perceiving the danger they were in. In warning the Muslims, the Prophet, had made himself the target of the enemy who were ever bent upon killing him, for, he was considered the root-cause of the whole trouble. And here was the best opportunity for them to do away with him, and thus to end the trouble once for all. It must be said to the credit of his faithful companions that his precious life was defended at the cost of their own lives. Those matchless martyrs defended their great master from the shower of arrows as best as they could, falling round him one by one. One Musab-bin-Umair fell; he was a person resembling the Prophet, and consequently some one thought he was the Prophet, and he shouted that the Prophet was slain. This alarming news spread like wild-fire among the Muslims which naturally caused no small grief and

confusion. Some lost heart, and laying down their swords, they said there was no use of fighting any longer as the Prophet was dead. Many were completely unnerved; they did not know what to do. Then Aus-bin-Naza said thus: "Of what worth is life then, if the Prophet is no longer in our midst. Let us fight on for the cause, which he fought for." These words put fresh life into them and cheered them up considerably. The faithful companions rushing through the enemy's ranks, once more stood round their beloved Prophet who was to their great relief still alive. In the meanwhile, the Prophet had recieved serious injuries and he fell down, unable, through sheer loss of blood, to stand any longer. His faithful followers made an impregnable human wall around him with their bodies, and as soon as one fell the gap was readily and immediately filled up by another. So, the enemy's best efforts to get to the Prophet were of no avail.

By this time, the Muslim had managed to get into order again and had closed their ranks. Having thus completely regained their proper position and order, and having completely recovered from the shock, they were now able to give the enemy a good fight; and they had during the affray retreated to a position that was safe and were consequently able to repulse the attacks of the enemy every time. The Quraish put forth all their efforts, tried their best and utmost, but to no purpose. They could not gain even an inch of progress, for every one of their attacks, without a single reception, met with thorough repulsion at the hands of the Muslims who were now marvellously

inspired with a new hope, with an astonishingly reckless daring and matchless zeal. The Quraish soon gave up all hopes of crushing the Muslims; besides they were in a position of disadvantage, for, they were completely exposed to the continual showers of arrows and stones from the Muslims. Expert archers like Abu Talha and Saad did excellent work; they kept pouring down their arrows on the enemy, while the Muslims themselves were sheltered from their arrows and stones. In the end they decided it was best to retreat since they were frustrated in all their attempts against the Muslims. But before leaving the battlefield, they quenched and quelled all their worst passions of revenge and hatred by having recourse to the most barbarous procedure, namely, by taking vengeance even on the dead bodies of the Muslims. Terrible, horrible and most cruel acts of barbarity were committed on the dead. The bodies were mercilessly mutilated. Hinda, the wife of Abu-Sufyan, who had hated Hamza and was the cause of his death, seeing his dead body, ripped it open, took out the liver and chewed it; she then took his intestines and garlanded herself with them.

The Quraish then commenced shouting things to the Muslims; Abu Sufyan called out: "Is Mohammad there among you?" The Prophet instructed his friends to keep strict silence and not to reply. Hearing no reply, Abu Sufyan then called out twice: "Is Abu Bakr among you?" Again there is no reply. So, he called a third time, "Is Omar there among you? and added, "all of them are slain; if they were alive, they must have responded." This

was too much for Omar who could no longer remain silent as instructed by the Prophet, and so he shouted back, "O thou enemy of Allah, they are all alive yet to bring woe unto thee." Then Abu Sufyan shouting said: "Glory to Hubul!" Now the Prophet himself advised Omar to reply to this and the latter replied: "Allah is the most High and the most Mighty." When the name and glory of Allah was involved the Prophet could not remain silent. He found it extremely necessary to give a fitting reply to the enemy. He thought it unnecessary even to care for the mad shoutings of Abu Sufyan, much less to reply to them, so far as the matter was purely personal. Hence, he forbade at first any reply. It may be also noted here that the Prophet, despite all the atrocities and barbarities of the enemy, had a tender heart full of mercy even for the enemy. While the enemy were showering arrows upon him, he implored God thus: "O Allah! Forgive my people, for they do not know".

Here it is worth while to pause a little to reflect about the deepest devotion of the Prophet's followers who sacrified their lives to protect the most precious life from the enemy's dangerous attacks. When the most critical time came to prove their true worth and loyalty, they did not lag behind. They fully justified their pledge and War-cry which was as follows: "We are the very people that have pledged themselves to Mohammad to fight in defence of our faith throughout our lives." History fails to show another band of such admirable martyrs, immortal examples of the true spirit of Islam. It is indeed a "glory both for the

teacher and the taught", and this martyrdom did, no doubt, amply compensate for all the blunders that the Muslim army committed during the battle, for going against the strict orders of the Prophet and thus spoiling their cause not a little. Such was the spirit of devotion that the great personality created in all, that even women took a great interest in this battle. The Prophet and his cause was so dear to them also. "Women were not behindhand in showing their devotion to the Prophet on this occasion, for Umar-i-Nasiba drew her sword and her example was followed by Umm-i-Salma, Ayesha and others, who made onslaught on the enemy and can rightly claim to have saved the situation in the nick of time." In fact, they even outshone men in their unquestioned devotion to the Prophet, so much so that they were not so half anxious about the life and safety of their dearest and nearest kith and kin as they were anxious about the safety of the Prophet's sacred life. The following paragraph will clearly and in detail explain this point.

When Khalid's unexpected attack caused a general confusion among the Muslim ranks, some of the Muslims who were cut off from the main army, left the field for their homes under the false impression that their army was defeated. But they, who had gone home, leaving the Prophet behind, had not a good reception at the hands of their wives who threw dust at their faces for their lack of devotion to the Prophet. Many women marched straight to the battlefield as they were much anxious to know ahout the welfare of the Prophet. A certain Ansar lady

among them, meeting some one on the way who was evidently returning from the scene of battle, enquired about the important news there. And to this he replied first that her father was slain in the fight. She received the news with perfect calmness saying, "for Allah we are, and to Him shall we return," (2:156) but she anxiously enquired whether the Prophet was safe. She was then informed that her brother was also slain. But she repeated the same Quranic words, more anxious to know about the Prophet. That her husband too, had fallen was the next sad news that she received from him. It was indeed painful news to her. Yet repeating the Quranic verse, she wanted to know from him whether the Prophet was safe, and receiving an answer in the affirmative, the heavy cloud of anxiety disappeared from her face, the glad news making her face quite bright again. And seeing the Prophet afterwards she exclaimed: "Now that you are alive, every calamity seems small.' That the Prophet was safe and alive was the greatest consolation and relief to her and she could bear with perfect resignation those triple personal calamities. Many other ladies exhibited the same spirit of resignation when they heard how their men were slain and mutilated on the battlefield. Such was the depth of their devotion to the greatest man with his greater cause.

Thus ended the battle of Uhud, ended in victory to none. The enemy now concentrated their attention on the question of retreat. They were not courageous enough to continue their fight to a finish. Since, the Muslims, had already retreated for safety in the

mountain shelter close by, Medina was quite open to the Quraish for an attack. But they, perhaps feared that further disaster would be the only result, and thus discretion proving the better part of valour, they decided to retreat to their city, Mecca, as fast as they could, covering a pretty good distance on the very first day. What were they to tell their people on their return to Mecca? They could not say they had scored a victory, for they had with them neither the spoils of victory nor the prisoners of war. So, after retreating some distance, they halted to ponder over this and to decide what was to be done. Some one suggested going back with a view to fight to the finish, but there was no response to this; for, the courage, and spirits of all were too much at the ebb, almost at the freezing point. The Muslims on the other hand, were asked by the Prophet if they would like to give a chase to the enemy; everyone among them, although almost exhausted, gladly responded to this, meanwhile, the Quraish army were still wavering and hesitating, not courageous at all to take a bold move. Then the news reached them that the Muslims were after them. This was too much for Abu Sufyan; gathering his men together, he quitely and quickly marched off.

Some say that the Muslims were defeated at the battle of Uhud. This statement to say, the least of it, is not true, for, such a statement can only be the outcome of a lack of knowledge concerning true historical facts. It is true that the loss in the Muslim army was heavy, but in no way were they defeated. Is it possible that the defeated would be the last to leave the field of battle, while the victorious marched without any prisoners or spoils of war? Or, would

the defeated have the courage to pursue the victors a few hours after the battle, or would the victors themselves flee when they hear of the pursuit? In fact, it was in no sense a victory to the Quraish as it was equally in no sense a defeat to the Muslims, and during the final stage of the battle the Muslim army had decidedly all the advantages. Although nobody will admit that it was a complete victory to the Muslims, yet in a way it was a victory to them and to them alone. For, it was they who held the field to the last while they saw the enemy retreat before them; those showers of arrows themselves must tell why the enemy left the field—not a sign of victory, to be sure, under any principle of warfare. The loss of so many among them did not cause the Muslims to lose heart; despite all the barbarous atrocities committed on the very slain, despite all troubles and afflictions, they with their true Islamic spirit, were quite ready to pursue the enemy who had already left the field. We saw how even their women were imbued with a similar spirit, possessing rare powers of endurance, courage, resignation and devotion. The enemy was glad at the large number of Muslims dead, for they thought the power of Islam had been greatly reduced; but they forgot that Islam is imperishable: How can it perish, built as it was out of imperishable materials, with its unshakable foundation, truly and well laid by the invisible hand of God himself? "Islam is like a rubber ball, that bounces higher, the harder it is hit," says the great philosopher and thinker, Sir (Dr.) Iqbal. The succeeding chapters will bear ample testimony to this beautiful and true statement. The undying spirit of Islam did above all, triumph in the battle of Uhud.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THF PERILOUS PERIOD THAT FOLLOWED.

IT is a well-known fact that the Quraish spared no pains or expense in making the necessary preparations for the battle of Uhud, for they did their utmost to get together a skilled and well-equipped army before undertaking such a big expedition. Although they did not win a victory, the net result of the battle was, that there was visible among all the Arab tribes a deep current of unrest, making the lives of the Muslims in Medina more and more perilous every day. These tribes felt sure that the Quraish were not the people to keep quiet. They were confident that they would ere long get together a large army to inflict the final, crushing defeat on the small band of Muslims. With a view of sharing the honour, in the final overthrow of the Muslims, tribes here and there, were preparing themselves to join the Quraish in molesting the Muslims. Then there were the Jewish tribes in Medina, the most untrustworthy people residing within the very walls of the city, who were also ready prepared to side with the Quraish, ready to cast to the winds agreement according to which they were to render all assistance to the Muslims when necessary. So, they were not only a source of help, but they were a positive hindrance and nuisance to the suffering band of Muslims. Besides, there were the hypocrites who decided to come out in the open and trouble the Muslims in every possible way. Other neighbouring

tribes, seeing how the Muslims were so badly placed, also commenced their preparations against them. Once more, the Muslims found themselves in grave danger, hemmed in by enemies from all sides, ready to fall upon them at any moment. The Holy Prophet was deeply concerned with the welfare of those who had given up all to follow him and his noble cause. As their leader, the greatest and the most serious responsibility had fallen on him now. It was his bounden and sacred duty to devise the most suitable ways and means to ward off the impending danger. It was an extremely anxious period for the Muslims. It was not to them a peaceful time at all, though there was no battle. Their situation was perhaps worse than what it was on the battlefield of Uhud, surrounded by deadly enemies on all sides. Day and night they were compelled to be armed, to be vigilant and guarded at all times, not knowing when they would be attacked. Such a period of suspense and constant anxiety must have been extremely trying and painful to them. The stress and strain of those days soon told on the poor Muslims. They were after all human beings. Their patience and energy were entirely exhausted, were brought to a breaking point. In despair they went to the Holy Prophet to inform him of their extremely hard plight, to point out to him how things had reached an unbearable stage. The Prophet could very well gauge the delicate situation, and nobody else could have so keenly felt for them as he could. He did his best to cheer them, to comfort and console them as best as he could. He begged them not to give up hope, assuring them that Allah would never desert

them in their hour of need and that they would be soon in safety and peace.

One day at dawn, there was a great uproar at the gate of the city. The Muslims, thinking that they had been attacked or that the enemy had committed some raid, quickly gathered together, and commenced preparing to march out to meet the enemy. To their great surprise they saw the Prophet galloping towards them. At the onset of the uproar he had immediately ridden out to see what the trouble was, and he returned to inform his people that there was no cause for any anxiety. This proved to the Muslims how brave the Prophet was and how he treated all personal risk and danger with a "daring contempt." He rode out alone and unarmed to see what had caused the uproar. If the enemy had come to attack the Muslims, seeing the Prophet alone, they would have immediately taken the opportunity of killing him. Even during such a troublous and trying time, when every moment was heavy with anxiety, he had that supreme faith in him and that unhesitating faith in Him and in His great cause. He was really a born leader and soldier, a great man of action.

Living as they did under such perilous situation, the Muslims continued their sacred mission of conversion, of spreading the light of Islam as far as possible, although, under the circumstances, they could not meet with any great and appreciable success. Expert theologians and preachers appointed by the Prophet, who had thoroughly committed to memory the Holy Quran, spread the truth of the new

faith among the various tribes around. And here was a good opportunity for treachery to play its part, for its foul display in destruction by inviting these preachers under the pretext of obtaining religious instruction, and then conveniently making them a prey to the swords. One such treachery followed by barbarous butchery, that took place during this time, may be particularly noted here. It was in the month of Safar in the year 4 A.H. and Bir-i-Mauna was the place. Abu Bara who was the chief of the tribes of Banu-Amir and Bamir-Sulaim, came himself to the Prophet with some valuable presents. He told the Prophet that his people were inclined to embrace Islam, and therefore he asked the Prophet to send with him a few preachers. The Prophet had his own misgivings; he refused the presents, and he told the chief that he feared treachery. But Abu Bara assured the Prophet about the perfect safety of the men who were to accompany him. This assurance convinced the Prophet and he sent seventy good preachers with him. They went a short distance out of Medina with Abu Bara, and reaching a place called Bir-i-Mauna, they were confronted by a large army, and all of them were cruelly put to death, with the sole exception of one Amr Umayya, who alone managed to make good his escape to Medina, and from whom, therefore, the Prophet was able to learn the shocking news about the tragic fate of the rest of his companions.

Another tragic incident of the same type took place at Raji. Certain tribes, informing the Prophet that they had embraced the faith of Islam, wanted teachers for religious instructions. The ten persons

accordingly sent by the Prophet for the purpose were, excepting two, slain, though they offered ressistence and struggled their best to save themselves. The two, Khubaib and Zaid, who surrendered themselves to the enemies, relying on their pledge of protection were, after all, sold to the Meccans, as slaves. Khubaib was executed by his masters. He met his end with that characteristic calmness and courage of every true follower uttering the following verses:

"While I am killed as a Muslim, I do not mind on which side I fall for the sake of Allah.

"All this is in Allah's path. He may shower His blessings on my mutilated limbs, should it so please Him".

Zaid who was sold to one Meccan chief, Safivan-bin-Umayya by name, also met with the same fate as Khubaib. Many important persons from among the Quraish, including Abu Sufyan, were present at the execution. Before dealing the death-blows with the sword on the helpless victim, Abu Sufyan tried to tempt him, saying thus: "Do you like that your life may be spared on the condition that Mohammad be slain in your stead." The victim, even though he was at the very jaws of death and even though he had to meet his doom within the next few moments, did not deem his life so precious, and so he replied to the temptation in the most befitting way as follows: "My life is nothing as compared with the Prophet's. I would not like to see him put to the pain of an ordinary thorn prick, even though it were to save my

life." Can personal devotion and attachment go any further?

It can, more or less, be imagined, how terribly shocked the Prophet was, to hear about the calculated, cold and undiluted treachery of the tribes. Was it not a very heinous crime to put to death in the most cruel way such pious teachers and followers of Allah, who had cheerfully sacrified their all in the way of Allah and Truth? Even the most merciful person like the Prophet, who was sent as a mercy to the whole of mankind, could not bear to see such ideal and loyal companions so callously done away with. So deeply and keenly did he feel for such precious lives that he was even on the very verge of imploring God to punish the perpetrators of these crimes. Those criminals did deserve the most cruel punishment. But the Prophet, the perfect embodiment of mercy, ought not to make any distinction between friend and foe, and he was not therefore, to concern himself with the punishment of even the bitterest enemies. Regarding this, he received the Divine revelation which said thus: "You have no concern in the affair whether He turns to them mercifully or chastise them." (3:127). The most heinous crimes, all the more, brought to the forefront the Prophet's mercy to the highest degree possible. He was, indeed, born as a mercy to the whole of mankind, and history cannot point out a better personification of mercy. "Compared with the Prophet, even great Apostles must fall short of him."

The whole of Arabia was then, in short, pitted against Islam, the Ansars in Medina being the only

people of unquestioned loyalty, who kept up to the end their holy pledges with the Prophet. Quite opposite were the Jews, untrustworthy, and disloyal from the very beginning, who were ready to break even the most sacred and serious pledges. Besides, there were the hypocrites and the idolaters, equally bent upon crushing Islam. Under the circumstances, to sit quiet without planning any precautionary measures against such oppositions, would ultimately mean only certain disaster to the cause of Islam. The growing storm and opposition visible all around must be met at the very first stage itself, and properly dealt with, before it was able to gather together more and more strength, before it assumed alarming and uncontrollable proportions. So, self-defence and self-preservation became almost a sacred duty to them, for it meant saving Islam itself from the cruel clutches of the enemies.

Fortunately, at this time, the enemies were separable from one another. When once, they got united together, that would mean quite a different and difficult thing. The Holy Prophet did not fail to realise the supreme importance of adopting a definite policy now. It was decided to attack each tribe separately, without giving a chance of delay for all to unite together. Hence. several small battles or skirmishes took place one after the other during this time. The first of these was known as the battle of Badr-i-Sughra (Small Badr) or Badr-i-Akhira (second) Badr). It would appear that the Quraish, before leaving the field in the battle of Badr, had challenged that the fate of the parties would be again

tried at Badr. Accordingly, the Muslims had marched at Badr, the next year, but did not find the Quraish army there. They returned home peacefully selling the merchandise that they had brought with them at the fair annually held there. Then came the battles of Dumat-ul-Jandal and Zat-ur-Riqa in the year 5 A.H. and these were followed in the year 6 A.H. by the battles of Banu Lihyan and the Zu Qarad. Several other such skirmishes took place.

Among these, the battle of Muraisi or Banu Mustaliq, that took place in 5 A.H. deserves a special and detailed mention. The Banu Mustaliq were inhabitants of a place called Muraisi, and they were staunch allies of the Quraish. Instigated by the latter, the chief of this tribe, Haris-bin-Abi-Zirar was making the necessary preparations to attack Medina. The Prophet got information about this, and the Muslims were also getting ready for a battle. Though Haris fled with his army, the Muslims had to face the inhabitants of Muraisi in a battle. They completely defeated those inhabitants and took six hundred of them as prisoners including the chief of the tribe, Haris-bin-Abi-Zirar, his daughter and two sons. The daughter, Juwariya, preferred to stay with the Prophet and did not want to be ransomed. This shows what a kind treatment she had received as a prisoner at the hands of the Prophet and his men. Later, on her own request, the Prophet married her, paying the ransom money from his own pocket. After the marriage, the six hundred prisoners, belonging to her tribe, were set free.

During this time, some of the hypocrites, out of sheer spite, levelled a false and baseless charge against Ayesha's chastity, and timely Divine revelation (24:11-20) disarmed all suspicion regarding this matter. The righteous are ultimately placed on a higher level when such baseless charges evaporate into sheer nothingness. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was also a victim of such a charge and the Quran refutes it by saying that it was a "glaringly false accusation against Mary". (4:86) The scandalous tongue has not spared any.

1. Feed the hungry and visit the sick, and free the captive if he be unjustly confined. Assist any that be oppressed, whether Muslim or non-Muslim.

2. Say that which is true, though it be better and displeasing to many.

3. Guard yourself against six things, and I am your security for Paradise: When you speak, speak the truth; perform when you promise; discharge your trust; be chaste in thought and action; and withhold your hand from striking, from taking which is unlawful and bad.

4. He will not enter paradise who behaveth ill to his slave. The slaves that say their prayers are your brothers.

5. The ink of the scholoar is more holy than the blood of the martyr.

6. The acquisition of knowledge is a duty incumbent on every Muslim male and female.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BATTLE OF AHZAB



HILE the Muslims were thus engaged in several minor battles against the neighbouring Arab tribes, the Quraish in Mecca were by no means inactive. They were rapidly collecting and preparing a large army in order to attack again the Muslims in Medina. They succeeded in getting the Jewish tribes, settled in Khaibar, to join them, and also managed to secure the help of Beduin tribes, living in the neighbourhood of Mecca. Thus a large and combined army of the Quraish, the Jews and the Beduins, numbering from ten to twenty-four thousand marched towards Medina, with the grim determination this time to crush Islam completely. Even the very Jewish tribes in Medina, proved false at the last moment, casting their lot on the enemy's side. The impending calamity seemed to cast a great gloom over Medina.

The Prophet, being informed of the approach of the mighty army, hurriedly summoned his companions to gather to devise means to meet the very grave situation. Something had to be definitely decided upon, to save the Muslims from being entirely wiped out. Salman, the Persian, suggested that a deep and wide trench should be dug round the city. This wise proposal was agreed to by all. The strong and high walls of houses by themselves served as a strong fortification for one side of the city, and another side

was equally protected by a natural barrier of huge rugged rocks. So, the digging work was begun in right earnest on the two unprotected sides. The Prophet apportioned the task among parties of ten men each, himself taking the part of an ordinary labourer. The Muslims set to work cheerfully, and while digging recited verses from the Quran. They sang in beautiful chorus thus: " O Allah! had it not been for Thy mercy, we could not have had guidance. We would not have given alms, neither would we have prayed. Send down tranquility upon us, and establish our steps in battle, for they are up against us and they wish to pervert us by force, but we refuse." "But we refuse"—this was the refrain, how apt and appealing! The Prophet sent forth, in the following words, his special prayer for Allah's blessings on the Refugees and the Helpers.

"O Allah! there is no felicity but the felicity of the hereafter. O Allah! have mercy on the Refugees and the Helpers!"

Thus they worked and went on digging, singing in praise of Allah and invoking his blessing and aid in their gigantic undertaking, all the while being marvellously inspired by the Prophet himself who worked amidst them like one of them. After a time, the work of a group of men came to a standstill, because, of an obstruction in the way in the form of a large block of stone. The men were soon quite exhausted in trying to break it, and they asked others to help them in that pretty difficult piece of work; but despite all these combined efforts the stone proved

extraordinarily adamant. The Prophet then got into the ditch and he struck the stone with his pick-axe; it moved a little, at the same time giving out a spark. The companions, seeing the spark, cried together in one voice: "God is Great", and to the Prophet it was revealed in that spark that he would be given the keys of the palace of the Syrian King. Another stroke at the stone and it was cracked; at the same time another spark of fire was visible, and the companions cried, "God is Great", and to the Prophet was revealed again that he would be given the keys of the Persian Kingdom. The third time he struck at the stone, it broke into little pieces, and the Prophet said to the companions that he was made aware that even the keys of Yemen would be his and that his followers would gain possession of all the countries mentioned. Then the Prophet informed them that he was shown on the first occasion the palace of Caesar, on the second, the palace of Chosroes, of Persia, and on the third, the palace of Sanaa. Such unexpected Divine revelations only too clearly point out how the holy cause, though tried to the utmost, was never, bereft of the guiding hand of God. The visions about the future greatness of Islam that the Prophet had, prove that he was really a Prophet of God who was enabled to prophecy or foresee the future events. "Is it not something passing the wildest stretch of human imagination? Who but the All-wise and All-knowing God could possibly reveal such mysteries of the future, at a juncture when Islam itself was threatened with utter extinction." Rabindranath Tagore has beautifully expressed that God is among those who break stones on the roadside, and that His garments are covered

with dirt and dust. Read the rock-breaking incident by the Prophet with his men around him, the whole atmosphere itself pervaded with divinity, and then what Tagore says is fully explained through this incident, with all its deep philosophical import.

Further, just think about the Holy Prophet himself working with others like an ordinary labourer, digging and breaking stones, and carrying loads on his head. This by itself is one of the wonders of the world's history. What better example is needed to show the dignity and sanctity of Labour? The Holy Prophet is the only one example in history of a person who, holding spiritual and temporal power, yet worked like an ordinary labourer along with others. "It is a distinguishing feature of the Prophet's character that he conferred lustre on whatever he set his hands to. Placed in whatever position, he acquitted himself with marvellous grace. If on the one hand he was the manliest of Kings, he was at the same time the kingliest of men." In him, humility and greatness met in a wonderful manner. He used to say: "I am only a man like unto you." And true to what he said, he could be seen with others, doing the humblest work.

It was an extremely anxious time for the Muslims, when so huge a force of nearly twenty four thousand men were almost at the gates of Medina, ready to crush them and their faith. The whole city seemed shaken to its very foundations. The extreme anguish, anxiety, and perplexity of the people can more or less be imagined. The Holy Quran pictures the sad

situation in the following words: "When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when the eyes turned dull and the hearts rose up to the throats, and you began to think diverse thoughts about Allah. There the believers were tried and they were shaken with a severe shaking." (33:10-11)

Notwithstanding the extremely anxious and trying situation, the Muslims held fast without doubting to the Divine revelation and to the words of the Prophet that assured them of the ultimate triumph of Islam, and consequently they thought that the enemy were having their last desperate attempt. They were therefore, sure of the enemy's defeat, despite their tremendous number. Even at such a trying hour, they never despaired of their cause, nor did they lose faith in Allah and His Divine Guidance. The Quran expresses their feelings in the following words: "And when the Believers saw the Allies, they said: This is what Allah and His Apostle promised us, and Allah and His Apostle spoke the truth; and it only increased them in faith and submission". (33:22)

As to the advance of the enemy, it seemed like a terrible cyclone, determined to sweep away every obstacle in its way. In spite of this, the Muslims were, as already pointed out, full of courage. Having now fortified the town against all attacks from without, another precautionary measure was taken against a possible attack from outside and against a treacherous attack even from within, from the unscrupulous Jews themselves. This was, to remove the women and children to a place of safety.

The enemy, approaching Medina, were faced with a set back when they discovered the unexpected deep trench around the town. They decided, therefore, to settle down to a siege, the only inevitable course open to them under the circumstances. The siege lasted for nearly a month, and it is needless to say that it caused great and severe sufferings and starvation to the Muslims, confined as they were within the four walls of the city and being cut off from all outside traffic and communications. To avoid the pangs of hunger, they used to tie pieces of stones round their abdomens. The Holy Prophet himself equally shared with others such sufferings of hunger and thirst. But no amount of hardship and suffering could damp a bit the spirits of the Muslims. The Prophet particularly felt very much for those Helpers who were so willingly and cheerfully undergoing all sufferings like the rest. So, for their sake, to weaken the strength of the enemy, the Prophet suggested one day the buying off the tribe of Ghatafan with an offer to them of one third of the produce of Medina. The Helpers hearing of the plan, did not wish it to be carried out. They said it was below their dignity to do such a thing, and such a compromise, they felt, would be dishonouring Islam itself. They preferred any amount of sacrifice to such a compromise tinged with dishonour and disgrace. So, they determined, "Come what may, we will fight to the last man".

In spite of all precautions, the Jews, and the hypocrites were on the look out for an opportunity to rise, from within Medina. Something in detail about the "hypocrites" may not be out of place here, for, the

word "hypocrite" bears a special significance in the history and phraseology of Islam. As long as the Prophet and the Muslims were in Mecca, opposition towards them was open and took the form of torments and cruelties, but in Medina, it took a special and unique form in order to undermine Islam and bring about its downfall from within. The Jews, now afraid of losing their power, because of the nearness of Islam, and others too, started becoming Muslims in name only. Abdullah-bin-Ubayy was at the head of these. Before the arrival of the Prophet in Medina he weilded great power and authority, and he would have even obtained kingship but for the presence in Medina of another greater personality in the person of the Prophet. At the outset, he offered some opposition, but the rapid growth of Islam led him to think, and he thought it better and more advisable to adopt hypocrisy as the best policy. He, therefore, became Muslim, and left no stone unturned in bringing troubles to Islam, and many others followed his example. It was, therefore, natural for the Muslims to be most watchful and guarded of these hypocrites, for, the danger from within, was as great as that from without, perhaps, the former was more to be feared as it was hopelessly clandestine and treacherous:

The Prophet decided to fight, and as usual several duels were tried first in which the Muslims had a decided advantage and success. Ali killed the Arab hero, Amr-bin-Wudd, who was believed to be a match for a thousand. Had there been no Ali, the Prophet's right hand, the result would have been

different and disastrous. It was no small service that Ali rendered on this critical occasion. The Prophet is believed to have said thus: "The striking of Ali on the day of the (BATTLE) of Trench excels the prayers put forth by both the worlds".

In the end, the Quraish made a general attack with all their force; yet they failed to cross the deep trench. Only their arrows and stones came down in terrible showers, and were it not for the firmness and discipline of the Muslims, the enemy would have won the game. Their steadfastness, in the end, was crowned with success. The huge army of 24,000 could not, after all, succeed in passing though the defence. They became weary of the siege and were thoroughly exhausted in their fruitless attempts to cross the trench. Their provisions had run short, yet they hesitated to retreat. Nor could they, like the Muslims, withstand hunger and thirst for days together. The mercenary soldiers had only their purely mercenary motive, and they were not obliged, like the Muslim soldiers, to suffer the utmost for a cause.

At this juncture, the powerful and terrible elements of nature, in which is reflected the might of God Himself, compensating for all the weakness on the side of the Muslim army, immediately drove away within one night, bag and baggage, the hesitating Quraish army from Medina. The clear, star-lit sky became all of a sudden dark, clouds began to gather thick, the gentle breeze grew gradually into a strong wind, which in turn became a raging and howling storm, and a heavy downpour of rain completed mighty

nature's wild revelry and joy. Gone, completely and cleanly gone, were all the Quraish tents, and there was visible in the early morning nothing but an open space before Medina. It seemed to the Quraish that the very elements of nature were against them. They took it as an evil omen. The Holy Quran alludes to this incident in the following words :

"Then He sent down against them a strong wind and an army which you could not see." (33 : 9)

This clearly shows that there was a Divine hand at work, which frustrated all attempts of the enemy to crush the handful of Muslims. Thus, the most powerfully organised expedition against Islam, failed utterly in accomplishing the task, returning to Mecca thoroughly disgraced and disappointed, returning sadder if not wiser.

1. "Acquire knowledge. It enables the possessor to distinguish right from wrong; it lighteth the way to heaven; it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when friendlessness; it guideth us to happiness; it sustains us in misery; it is an ornament among friends and an armour against enemies.
2. When thou shalt see one who hath been gifted with more than thyself in money and beauty, then look those who have been given less.
3. The Faithful do not die; they are transferred from this perishable world to that of eternal existence".

MOHAMMAD.

CHAPTER XX.

MUSLIM WARS WITH THE JEWS OF MEDINA

SURELY vehement hatred had already appeared from out of their mouths and what heir breasts conceal is greater still. (3 : 117) These words from the Holy Quran truly depict the general attitude of the Jews in Medina towards the Muslims. They were immediately and irreconcilably hostile towards the Prophet and his followers. They proved to be a serious obstacle, an eternal stumbling block, in the way of the Muslims. And their position and influence in Medina was not of an insignificant character. They formed a large portion of the population. Their trade and their usury business had made them rich, and they wielded considerable influence among the Aus and Khazraj in trade relations as they generally used to lend money to them. They were superior to others in education and culture too.

Holding altogether thus a superior position in Medina, the steadily growing influence of Islam made them jealous and they feared the Muslims would soon eclipse their power in Medina. We have already seen how the Prophet's friendly arguments with them were of no avail. In secret, they kept on friendly terms with the hypocrites and enthusiastically sided with the Quraish in all their hostile activities against the Muslims. They were the greatest enemy of the Prophet and his followers, the greatest enemy from within.

The morals of the Jews were corrupt and of low standard, why, morality or a code of moral among them was something almost absent. Many verses about their immorality were revealed to the Holy Prophet he felt it his duty to preach to them, to divert them from evil and sin, pointing out to them the righteous and virtuous path. They only resented such highly beneficial and salutory missionary tasks of the Prophet. Besides, their resentment against the preachings of the Prophet among them, the greatest cause that led to their antagonism towards Islam was that the Medinites were passing out of their influence and power, following the illuminating ideals and teachings of Islam. So, what commenced as jealousy was soon changed into positive deep hatred against the Muslims. As a result of this, hostilities that were formerly of a secret character, now became quite open, insolence, impudence and indecency, knowing no bounds. The Prophet himself was not spared. For instance, instead of saying the Muslim greeting, **"Assalam-O-Alaikum"**, they would go up to the Prophet and say, "Assam-o-Alaikum," which meant "Death be on you", while the former meant, "Peace be with you". Or while speaking to him, instead of the word, "Raa'ina", which meant, "Listen to us", they would shorten it and say, "Ra'ina", meaning, "You are a fool". They had other means of slighting and casting slur on Islam. They would become Muslims and shortly afterwards would again become unbelievers, so that others may think that there was something wrong with the teachings of Islam. And some would apparently embrace Islam to bring out of it along with them many who had a faith in it, increasing the number of unbelievers in this way.

They also turned their efforts to cause enmity and friction between the two important tribes of Medina, the Aus and the Khazraj. If they had succeeded in doing this, it would have broken the strength of the Muslims, but the timely arrival of the Prophet at the meeting averted the tragedy, preventing them from succeeding in their efforts. Generally, things became so serious that the position and lives of the Muslims themselves became delicately precarious.

They made insulting insinuations against Muslim ladies, and some even composed obscene verses concerning them. They even went so far as to molest them in the open streets. At this rate, such serious frictions could not but ultimately lead to a catastrophic explosion. See how a skirmish called the battle of Kinka arose. A Medinite woman went to the shop of a Jew where she was outraged. A Muslim passing by heard the cries, and going in and seeing the outrageous action he was so infuriated that he killed the Jew; seeing this, the other Jews who had by that time gathered there killed the Muslim. On hearing this the Holy Prophet went to the Jews and asked them to refrain from such actions in future, threatening them that like the Quraish they would be punished. The Jews answered that they would prove by fighting that they were not cowards like the Quraish. This was too much, not to be tolerated at all. As this was an open challenge, the Prophet accepted it. It was high time to fight out the matter to a finish, since neither a reconciliation nor threatening had its desired effect. So, the Prophet gave orders to the Muslims to commence preparations to fight the Jews. Having

thus deliberately and even wickedly broken their compact with the Muslims, the Jews decided to fight; but seeing that the Muslims were prepared for battle, they locked themselves up in their strong fortifications. The siege that followed lasted fifteen days, at the end of which the Jews surrendered and agreed to accept any decision the Holy Prophet would make. They were told to leave Medina immediately, which they did; seven hundred of them left and settled in Syria. It was the Jewish tribe of Benu Qainuqa who had caused the whole trouble.

The Banu Nazir was another Jewish tribe who broke their agreement with the Muslims and who had clandestine friendship with the Quraish. Once the Quraish wrote to them to see to the murder of the Holy Prophet; this they nearly succeeded in doing. It so happened that the Prophet had to go to them on business; while talking to them he was standing under a balcony. The Jews thought this a good opportunity to carry out their perfidious project. Two of them, went up, one carrying a huge stone, which, if it had only hit the Prophet, would have certainly killed him immediately. Just in time, the Prophet felt there was something wrong, and he moved away from the dangerous point. Later, they again attempted to take his life. They sent an invitation asking the Prophet and three of his companions to visit them. The Prophet agreed. But when he neared their place, he was again inspired that they meant foul play, and he immediately returned.

Conditions became so dangerous that it was deemed necessary to check the Banu Nazirs by fighting

them in open battle. Like the Banu Qainuqa they fortified themselves in their quarters, and the Muslims besieged them. This seige also lasted for about two weeks, after which period the Banu Nazirs surrendered. The Prophet thought it quite unsafe to allow any more such treacherous and dangerous enemies to remain in the city. So, they were asked either to leave the city and settle elsewhere, or to renew their agreement of mutual friendly relationship with the Muslims. They chose the former alternative. They left Medina in a big procession, with a band playing in front and women singing. The little property they left behind, included weapons of warfare, and the Muslims took possession of it. Some of the Banu Nazir settled in Khaibar; some scattered and settled elsewhere.

The Banu Quraiza were the only Jewish tribe now left in Medina. So far they had not been guilty of any treachery against the Muslims, and they willingly renewed their agreement with them. But the Banu Nazir were still bent upon causing trouble to Islam. In the battle of Ahzab they got the best opportunity. They roused not only the Quraish against the Muslims, but also the various Bedouin tribes of the deserts. They even went so far as to break the friendship that existed between the Muslims and the Banu Quraiza. In the beginning of the battle of Ahzab, the Banu Quraiza were not keen on quarreling with the Muslims; why, they even refused to fight against them. But the Banu Nazir informed them that all the tribes, including the Quraish, were combining their forces to attack the Muslims and that the Muslims had, therefore, absolutely no chance of survival against such a gigantic

combination, determined to crush once for all the little great enemy. The Banu Quraiza were told to choose between joining the Muslims and being completely wiped out, or throwing in their lot with the other tribes, contributing their quota in attacking and overcoming the Muslims. This poisonous and alluring advocacy had a magical effect on the Banu Quraiza, who suddenly breaking their agreement with the Muslims, joined hands with the anti-Islamic confederates, promising their help to them in the battle of Ahzab. So, they with the hypocrites, were a great source of danger to the Muslims in Medina during that battle. They actually took part in the battle. The Holy Quran mentions about their treacherous activity referring to them as "those of the people of the Book who rendered them (the confederates) help." (33 : 26) History too corroborates the fact. It is said that they had even thought of attacking the Muslim females. "With twenty-four thousand strong on the other side of the ditch, exerting tooth and nail to crush Islam, and with the hypocrites busy mongering mischief within, the treachery of the Banu Quraiza added enormously to the Muslims difficulties". At the conclusion of the battle, it was decided to inflict punishment on the Banu Quraiza who had proved the worst sort of enemy. They must be punished for their treachery. They, like the other two Jewish tribes, betook themselves to fortified strongholds, a siege followed, but they were soon forced to surrender. The Banu Quraiza then asked the Prophet to allow Saad-bin-Muaz, a former ally of theirs, to choose what punishment they deserved. The Prophet agreed. If it had been left to him to decide the punishment, they

would have been punished leniently with an exile as it was done with other sister tribes. But Saad was not so lenient. He wanted to inflict the just and right punishment. Their offence, he said, was too grave to let them off with a light punishment; besides he wanted it to be an example to the other tribes. The punishment he decided upon was to be the very same that the Banu Quraiza themselves used to allot to their fellow foes, and that was, every male member of the tribe to be sentenced to death, and the women and children taken prisoners and the property to be confiscated. This decision was in accordance with the punishment prescribed in their own scripture. This is what the Old Testament says:

"And when the Lord, thy God, hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. But the woman and the little ones and the cattle and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof shalt thou take into thyself and thou shalt eat the spoils of thy enemies which the Lord thy God has given thee." (DEANT 20, 13 : 14).

Thus in obedience to the verdict of Saad, the judge chosen by the Banu Quraiza themselves, three hundred, the whole male portion of the tribe, were put to death. The females and children were taken captives, and their property was confiscated. Harsh undoubtedly as the punishment meted out was, the Prophet in no way was responsible for the same left to himself, as already pointed out, he would have been certainly lenient. And in this case, there was no cause for complaint. The Judge chosen was according

to their request, one of their own men, the law followed was their own Mosaic law as given in their sacred book, the Old Testament, and the Jews themselves had meted out similar punishments to their fallen foes. Considering the gravity of the offence, the most heinous crime of treachery, and judging the punishment meted out by any standard of military ethics, the extreme attitude taken was just and justifiable. Even Saad could not help passing such a severe judgment under the circumstances. Says Mohammed Ali in his book, "Mohammad the Prophet": "The objection against the harshness of this punishment is an objection against the Mosaic Law. It is, in fact, an unconscious censure of that law as well as an admission that a more human law must come to supersede it. A contrast with the Islamic Law on this point will bring out into clear relief what a tender, sympathetic and compassionate law Islam came to inaugurate."

1 "Every man calleth a Muslim infidel, the same shall return upon him.

2 To abuse a Muslim is disobedience to God, and it is an infidelity to fight with one.

3 The best of good acts in God's sight is that which constantly attended to, though it be in a small degree."

MOHAMMAD.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE TRUCE OF HUDAIBIYYA.

E have seen how the mighty Quraish tried their best and utmost to undermine and harm Islam in the two successive battles of Badr and Uhud, bent upon bringing its downfall ultimately, and we have seen how their attempts, after all, proved futile. It was nothing but Divine help that enabled the insignificantly small army of Muslims to do the impossible, namely to defeat the gigantic army of the enemy. Then the various Beduin tribes tried similar attempts against Islam, but with no better success. The Jews and the hypocrites also exerted their utmost against the Muslims from within the very walls of Medina. Each thus frustrated separately, they all made a common cause to achieve jointly, bringing together a combined, huge force, what they failed to achieve eagerly; but in this too the Hand of God came to the help of the Muslims, enabling them to score a grand and glorious victory, a victory so decidedly great that the enemy never after that, had the courage and audacity to march on Medina.

These are open, well-known and true historical facts, admitted by friends and foes alike. Those who think that Islam spread because of the sword, let them pause and study these battles in the acknowledged light of history, and then they are sure to come to the inevitable and irresistible conclusion that "Islam spread, not by the sword, but in spite of the sword."

Sword fell on the infant faith from all sides, and divers attempts were made to strangle it to death. But sword did not only destroy it or diminish its strength a bit, but on the other hand, it continued to spread more and more, gathering fresh impetus, vitality and virility, at every stage of trials, persecutions and battles. Among other things, three continued attempts were made on Medina with a grim determination to destroy altogether and once for all Islam, each attack being more vigorous than the previous one. What was the net result? The Muslims marched from victory to victory and consequently Islam grew in power and strength considerably. At Badr, the Muslim army was only barely three hundred, at Uhud it rose to seven hundred, and at Ahzab it rose as high as two thousand. So, all attempts of the enemy at weakening them, only strengthened them and their cause further and further. The greater, that is to say, the attempt to crush it (Islam) down, the more did it flourish. The more it was suppressed, the more it rose. Day by day, it went on thriving; no storm could uproot it, no hot wind could blight it. Divine hand was at work to support it.

A year after the battle of Ahzab, the Prophet saw in a vision, that he with his companions, was performing the pilgrimage at the KABA. This led him to think that, at last, the enemy, the Quraish and the Beduins, who had tried their level best to crush Islam, had come to know their strength and to realise that there was some inherent power in Islam which successfully withstood their onslaughts right through.

Therefore the Prophet thought that the vision about the pilgrimage was now a sign for him to go on pilgrimage to bring home to them the spiritual greatness of Islam as well. He also thought that the privilege of pilgrimage would never be denied to anybody, not even to the worst enemies. All considered, there was no particular reason for the Quraish to stand in the way of the Muslims performing the pilgrimage, nor was it likely that they would offer resistance in any way. So, in the year 6. A.H. with about 14000 companions accompanying him, the Prophet started for Mecca to perform the pilgrimage, but to avoid any misunderstanding as well as to impress upon the Quraish the entirely peaceful nature of their mission, he ordered that none should carry arms except a sheathed sword which was then a permissable common-place weapon. Therefore, with sacrificial animals and perfectly unarmed, all those 14000 pilgrims marched towards Mecca. The Quraish whose animosity had not died yet, made themselves ready to offer resistance to the Muslims. Budail, the chief of the tribe of Khuzaa, who was sympathetically inclined towards Islam, though not a Muslim himself, informed the Prophet of the intentions of the Quraish, and through him the latter sent word to the Quraish that the Muslims were there only for the pilgrimage and not for fighting. The Prophet also proposed to them to conclude the peace for certain period. In the meanwhile, the Quraish had posted themselves outside Mecca to bar the entry of the Muslims, closing all access to the city. The Prophet, having sent word to the Quraish through Budail, halted at a place called Hudaibiyya.

The prophet's message of peace was duly communicated to the Quraish by Budail. The wiser among them was in favour of accepting the peace proposal, because they knew perfectly well that they would not be able to do any further harm to Islam and its followers, and they were also fully aware that the Muslims had wonderfully withstood and outlived all their well-planned and gigantic oppositions. Besides, the conclusion of a peace would enable the Quraish to resume their trade relation with Syria, the route to which place was blocked to them then as it was in the hands of the Muslims, ever since their hostile attitude towards them. So, the Quraish sent to the Prophet, Urwa as their spokesman to conclude the terms of peace. Accordingly, Urwa went to the Prophet, but the talks about peace terms only ended in a fiasco, and Urwa's unpleasant and unwarranted remarks in the course of the discussion about the Prophet's followers were not, to say the least, an auspicious beginning. He told the Prophet that he should not place much faith and reliance in his followers, sinisterly hinting that they might leave him severely alone in the hour of dire need. This was too much on the part of the Quraish spokesman. Abu Bakr was naturally put out when he heard such impudent remarks from him and he treated him rather harshly. An incident occured there before the very eyes of Urwa that made him eat his own words, proving to him then and there how unhesitating and unflinching were the Prophet's followers and compelling him to go back deeply impressed with their sterling character. The time for the late afternoon prayer came. The Prophet had his usual

ablution. So, intense was the love and devotion of the followers for their Prophet that they did not let even a drop of the waste water fall on the ground. In glowing terms, Urwa told the Quraish about the Prophet thus: "I have been to the courts of the Kaiser as well as the Chosroes, but have never witnessed a semblance of devotion Mohammad commands".

Not disappointed at the first peace talks, the Prophet sent another messenger to the Quraish, but he was maltreated and the camel on which he rode was killed. As a further sign of hostility, a detachment of the Quraish came to kill as many of the Muslims as possible, but was itself brought under captivity. As the Muslims were not out for fighting, they let these go. Then Osman was sent to negotiate with the Quraish for peace. As soon as Osman reached there, he was captured, but the rumour spread in the Muslim camp that he was murdered, which made the Muslims believe that the Quraish were bent upon war. They were all unarmed, and their number was comparatively much less. All considered, it was the most critical period for them, being within the very gates of the enemy's country withal. And it is needless to point out that, under the circumstances, the enemy had all the advantage for them. Yet the Muslims had their firm faith in Divine Protection, though all the negotiations for the conclusion of peace had come to nought, though they were unarmed, and though the Quraish were determined to fight. The Prophet called upon his companions to take a fresh oath to the effect that they

would fight to the very last man for the sacred cause of their faith, and all took this oath cheerfully under a tree near by. It is known in Muslim history as the "BAI'AT-UR-RIDWAN", the "PLEDGE OF THE HEAVEN." The tree under which this historic and hallowed pledge was taken was afterwards cut by the order of Omar, the second Caliph, lest some sort of sanctity should be attached to the tree by credulous people. Islam can recognise and sanction the worship of God only, and no other object can be deemed worthy of worship. Anything that might smack of polytheism has no place in it.

"It (THE MUSLIMS' PLEDGE) was an act of unparallelled and dauntless self-sacrifice in the cause of Truth, and as such a red-letter event in the annals of Islam." This grim resolve of the Muslims to shed the last drop of blood in the worthy cause of Allah did not fail to reach the ears of the Quraish, and it brought them to their senses. Whatever their number or strength might be, (they had already known to their bitter cost and experience the utter futility of the same) the Quraish now realised that they would not succeed in overthrowing this matchless and marvellous band of tried devotees, who fought like men endowed with extraordinary strength and who were really the soldiers of Allah, though they were unarmed and few in number and seemingly weak withal. They were not so foolish now as to forget the unforgettable past, with those "sad over-thrown and foul defeats." Thus discretion prevailing over worthless valour and unnecessary pride, and rightly realising all their disadvantages, the Quraish sent one

Suhail-bin-Amr to come to terms with the Muslims. A truce was at last drawn up in which the parties agreed to maintain peace for ten years on the following conditions:—

(1) The Muslims shall return this year without performing the pilgrimage.

(2) Next year they may come and perform the pilgrimage, but shall not stay in Mecca more than three days.

(3) They shall not take back with them the Muslims living in Mecca, nor shall they stand in the way of any one from among themselves, wishing to remain in Mecca.

(4) They shall hand over to them any of the Meccans who might go over to Medina, but if any of the Muslims go over to Mecca, the Meccans shall not send him back to Medina.

(5) The Arab tribes shall be free to enter into alliance with whichever party they like.

The Muslims in general were not satisfied with these terms, which they viewed with undiluted and extreme disgust and which they rightly regarded as too humiliating to themselves. But they had to keep quiet out of regard for the ideal and conciliatory attitude of the Prophet. The obstinate attitude of the Quraish during the drawing up of the treaty also made the Muslims very angry and then also they kept quiet for the sake of the Prophet. Ali was chosen to reduce the agreement to writing and he began it with

the words: **Bis-Millah-irrahman-irrahim** that is, in the name of Allah, the compassionate, the Merciful. Suhail objected to this purely Muslim form of beginning and insisted on having the traditional form of Arabia, namely **Be-ismeka Allahumma** meaning, in Thy name, O God! and the Prophet agreed to it. Further on, Ali came to the words: "This is an agreement between Mohammad, the Apostle of Allah, and the Quraish"; Suhail again objected saying thus: "If we were to admit that you are the Apostle of God, why all this bloodshed." But Ali refused to erase the words, "the Apostle of Allah", with his hands, but the Prophet, who did not attach much importance to such trifling details and who fully knew at the same time that trifling differences would lead to grave troubles, did erase with his own hand those words, asking Ali to put instead "Mohammad son of Abdullah." (Ibn Hisham, Abulfida, and Mishkat book XVII).

Soon after the conclusion of these terms, one Abu Jandal, who had embraced Islam from Mecca and who was consequently undergoing inhuman and heart-rendering tortures at the hands of his own father, Suhail, came over to the Muslim camp, expecting a warm welcome there, and thinking that he would have there among the Muslims the much needed respite and peace of mind. He showed to the Muslims and the Prophet the scars of tortures on his body. Seeing him in such a pitiable plight, the Prophet was greatly moved, and he tried to get for his sake an exception to the agreement, so that he might be saved from further tortures. But Suhail himself would not yield; he wanted his son back. The Prophet had to

yield and the helpless victim of tortures had to go back among his people to suffer still worse at their hands. The extremely miserable plight that was in store for Abu Jandal was something which moved the hearts of the Muslims not a little. They were indignant and they were even wondering why the Prophet, instead of giving protection so badly needed by that admirable martyr in the cause of Islam, sent him back to his enemies, who were sure to torture him with added and studied vengeance. Omar, who could not bear to see this seeming helplessness of the Prophet, spoke to the Prophet in behalf of them all thus: "ARE YOU NOT THE TRUE APOSTLE OF ALLAH? IS NOT OURS A RIGHTEOUS CAUSE?" To these proper questions of Omar, the Prophet answering in the affirmative, the former then questioned thus: "Why then, should we suffer so much humiliation in the matter of faith?" The Prophet assured him that he was doing everything as dictated by Allah. Though the Muslims felt thus much grieved on account of Abu Jandal, the Prophet pointed out to them how they were then passing through a critical period of trial and how they had to remain, above all, perfectly true to their words. In fact, Abu Jandal's case was a trying one. Here was a man before the Prophet who rightly sought protection at his hands, he who had already suffered much in the cause of Islam. But how to protect him when that would mean going against the term of the truce that was only very recently signed? Were not his followers themselves true to their pledges to him? What would be his position if they were not so? So, should he not himself keep up to the pledge so

recently entered into with the enemy? So, it was quite clear to the Prophet that he must place pledge above religion, since truth itself is the highest form of religion. The consoling words of the Prophet to Abu Jandal put the whole matter in a nutshell thus: "Abu Jandal: have patience; we cannot break our promise. God will create some way for you out of the difficulty." (BUKHARI) Abu Jandal was not the only instance. Many others, who had embraced Islam and who had similarly sought protection under the Prophet against the tyranny of the Quraish, had to be sent back to Mecca as per the clause in the treaty.

We have shown how the Muslims felt this truce as most humiliating to themselves, and the Abu Jandal incident only further augmented in them such a feeling, though the Prophet himself could then and there gauge the whole situation in its proper perspective. And on his return to Medina, his right attitude in the matter received further confirmation and assurance through Divine revelation in the following words: "Surely we have given you a clear victory." (48:1). On the receipt of this revelation, the Prophet sent for Omar who was the most indignant, and told him that what he considered as a humiliating and ignominious defeat was really a great victory in the eyes of Allah himself. Omar was really overjoyed to hear this glad divine news, though he feared at first, and was under the impression that the Prophet sent for him to reprimand him for his extreme outspokenness and bluntness in discussing about the peace terms at Hudaibiyya. And now all the Muslims began to recite the chapter of victory, Al-Fatah.

"Was it in any way an act of ultracredulity on their part? As a matter of fact, their own experience in the past, convinced them of the truth of the Divine revelation. The career of Islam so far was replete with similar events".

We have already noted how from the very beginning the Prophet could alone look deep into the, true significance of the truce, while all his followers including Omar, could view it only, as a matter that wrought great humiliation for them. So, the timely Divine revelation, not only further corroborated and fully justified the view and procedure of the Prophet, but also clearly brought home to the minds of all the Muslims that they had no cause for regret and that they should feel only joyous over it. The truce was indeed a great triumph in more sense than one. To study carefully the terms of the Truce of Hudaibiyya, breathing through and through the great ideals of that inspiring personality in every word of them, is to understand what is meant by saying that peace has its victories of no less importance than war. And here is that sort of victory, a peaceful victory and a victorious peace, attested to by God Himself immediately after the Prophet's return to Medina. The followers' doubts were laid at rest.

Events that followed amply show further how this truce was really a victory to the Muslims, and to the great cause of Islam. If it was a humiliation and defeat, that also would certainly be reflected on the succeeding events. But note well what happened in

the year following the truce. On the occasion of the pilgrimage to Mecca that year that was allowed to be performed according to a clause in the truce, there were no less than ten thousand Muslim pilgrims with the Prophet instead of the fourteen hundred he had in the year of the truce. This sudden increase in the number of Muslims was to everbody a sign sure and unmistakable, pointing how it could not but be the direct outcome of the treaty. Before the truce of Hudaibiyya, a great gulf caused by blind hatred, gross ignorance and consequent warfares, was keeping off and aloof the non-Muslims from the Muslims, with absolutely no chance of knowing anything about Islam and its virtues, and about its noble band of followers who reflected in themselves in an admirable degree those virtues. It is but human nature to be utterly blind to and ignorant of the virtues of another, so far as the mind and even the head are poisoned by black hatred and enmity. Under such strong and deep influences, the enemy were so far only bent upon in their mad destruction. So Satanic was their attitude towards Islam and its followers that they could not even understand properly the great hero and personality behind the wonderful movement. He was all along only misconstrued and misrepresented.

There can be no doubt that now the black and thick curtain of gross ignorance and extreme hatred was lifted, letting in an unprecedented flood of light and consequently exhibiting the situations and events in all their truth and beauty. This is what is exactly meant by saying that the truce was a triumph of the first order, a spiritual victory, grand and glorious

Mark the marvellous metamorphosis! The wide gulf of differences and misconceptions was bridged; the two parties were brought together in close mutual contact in all their social intercourse, with the striking result that the non-Muslims got thoroughly imbued with the ideals and morals of the Muslims. Now that they could come into contact with those followers, they were able to discover the why and how of the magic influence of the Prophet over them, that raised them to heights of spirituality and morality. The beauty of his morals now dawned upon them, "removing all their misconceptions concerning him, about which the Divine revelation spoke as follows: "Surely He has given thee a clear victory, that Allah may rectify for thee that which has gone before of the fault attributed to thee and that which remains behind." Now that the truce granted a period of ten years of peace, they were compelled to come into closer contact with Islamic religion and culture. Now they came to understand that the Prophet was neither a mischief monger nor one who created havoc or cleavages among blood-relations, but that he was born to spread such teachings as would edify and elevate the whole of mankind. They now realised that they were led astray in estimating the character and personality of the Prophet, for they came to find out for themselves that he was possessed with a character beyond reproach and that no amount of calumny and slander could mar or change his sterling qualities. And so, many were the Arabs who now entered into the fold of Islam and its brother-hood, firmly impressed with the sublimity of the Prophet's ideals and the purity of his comrades' lives.

The Divine revelation, thus finding its due fulfilment in the markedly changed attitude of the enemy and in the rapidly increasing peaceful conversations that followed, is capable of a further elastic and right inter-pretation, pointing out the depth of its prophetic significance, which is especially contained in the words, "that which remains behind." Christian Europe, like those enemies of Islam in those days, had for a long time all sorts of wrong and ignorant notions about the Holy Prophet and his teachings. Happily, now it is gradually finding out that what all its historians and other Christians writers had painted in the darkest and the most lurid colours about the Prophet and his teachings are, to say the least, wrong; for, now it is coming into closer and better contact with the Muslims. "Europe is daily awakening to the nobility and purity of his character. A general recognition of the true sublimity of the Prophet's life is bound to come, sooner or later, as foretold in the Quran."

It is thus clear that those harsh terms were accepted by the Prophet, because of the Divine purpose behind the truce, and also because of the peace-loving nature of the Prophet. We saw how the Prophet was from the very beginning, trying to avoid any hitch of bloodshed, making the enemy clearly understand his peaceful intention and we saw how the Quraish were yet bent upon bloodshed. The Prophet had to use, in fact, all his ingenuity in bringing round the inveterate enemy to a gesture of peace, and all these show his extreme anxiety to avoid bloodshed and to conclude peace at any cost. Even his own

people could not understand his tactful and far-sighted move which was rightly and justly crowned with positive success. The Muslims had defeated the Quraish on every occasion, and in spite of being unarmed they could have done so this time as well, but the Prophet as a personification of infinite mercy was not the person to reject an inclination towards peace, howsoever slight it was, truly following the Quranic injunction which says : "And if they inclined towards peace, thou shalt also incline towards it." (8:61)

The Abu Jandal incident clearly shows how harsh the terms of the truce were against the Muslim converts in Mecca, and how they could not, at the same time think of saving themselves of all the troubles by escaping to Medina. In fact, the truce ought to have only completely damped the spirits of those who might think of getting themselves converted to Islam. For then, their life would be miserable in Mecca, nor could they escape to Medina to avoid such a life. In spite of all these overwhelming and systematic obstacles, the Muslim brotherhood rose rapidly in number after the conclusion of the truce of Hudaibiyya. Such was the sterling worth of Islam and such was the magnetic influence of that mighty personality. And is this not a tangible and indisputable proof against those blindly say that Islam was spread through the sword, when the fact is proved that many joined its ranks at the most critical and inalterative period ?

About this, Mohammad Ali in his book, "Mohammad The Prophet", says thus : "Such being

the situation, the progress of Islam could come, as a matter of course, to a standstill. But is it not remarkable that on the contrary, Islamic light spread during this period at a tenfold pace? What is then the one logical conclusion? Nothing more than this, that the intrinsic worth of Islam outweighs by far the whole lot of tortures. The enchanting beauty of Islam makes its own lover forgetful of all pains its acceptance may entail. Rejection at Medina, no more than persecution at Mecca, could discourage them. Sufferings and difficulties and afflictions sank into insignificance before the all-absorbing loveliness of Truth. Here is another occasion for the critic to ponder. Should he call this the spreading of Islam by sword, or the spreading of Islam in spite of the enemy's sword?"

This chapter may be closed by noting down how one Utba converted to Islam during this time and consequently undergoing like Abu Jandal, equally harsh treatment at the hands of the Quraish, saved himself from an awkward predicament by his daring and timely resourcefulness. Two envoys of the Quraish demanded of the Prophet his extradition when he sought shelter at Medina. The Prophet could not but advise him, as per the term of the truce of Hudaibiyya to return to Mecca. "Do you force me back to idolatry" was the trying question to the Prophet from Utba. The Prophet was in an awkward position, yet his duty was clear to him. He must on no account sacrifice his word of honour he could not belittle the sanctity of his pledge; So he spoke to Utba in consoling words thus: "Utba, we cannot help

making you over to the Quraish. Allah will open a way out for you." Utba had to yield at last, had to accompany the two envoys back to Mecca to suffer worse at the hands of the Quraish. But he himself found out a way to avoid the catastrophe that awaited him at Mecca, inspired by the instinct of self-preservation. He must, he decided, save his life somehow from the clutches of the two guards who were taking him back to Mecca. Seizing a good opportunity, he struck a good and effective blow at one of them, and he was killed instantaneously. The other naturally ran away for life. Utba now settled at a sea-shore place called Is, which gradually become a safe place of settlement, a convenient colony for Muslim refugees. Utba thus, not only saved himself, but also many others from the cruel clutches of the Quraish. This growing colony alarmed the Quraish. They withdrew the clause that required the sending back of Muslim converts to Mecca who might take shelter at Medina. Bravo Utba, for finding out a way for thyself and for many others, and for forcing the proud Quraish to relinquish their heartless attitude !

"The best of you is he who is best to his family and relations."

* * * *

"Paradise lies at the feet of mothers."

* * * *

Learn knowledge, though it be in China."

—MOHAMMAD.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PROPHET'S DESPATCHES TO THE KINGS.

SO, the truce of Hudaibiyya turned out to be, beyond doubt, a complete triumph for Islam, the number of Muslims increasing by leaps and bounds day by day. Renowned warriors on the enemy's side, like Khalid and Anru-bin-ul-'As, had now joined the worthy brotherhood of Islam–a matter for no small pride and of no small importance and significance. The truce had achieved, as we have pointed out, what many wars had not and might not have achieved. All these set the Prophet a thinking. He thought that the opportune time had already dawned on Islam to embrace a wider field of activity, to spread the message of Allah far and wide to the various kingdoms around, so far restricted within the bounds of ARABIA. Islam had a universal mission to fulfil. The Prophet called together his companions to speak to them about his intended scheme and wider sphere of activity. It was decided to take up the matter immediately.

Accordingly, the Prophet sent envoys to the Kaiser of Rome, the Chosroes of Persia, the Aziz of Egypt, the Negus of Abyssinia and certain Arab chiefs inviting them to embrace Islam. It was one Abdullah-bin-Huzafa who took to the Persian court the Prophet's despatch. Chosroes was much amazed at the audacity of the furgitive of Mecca for addressing him on equal terms as was evident from the words " From

Muhammed ", which they were at the top of the letter above his own name. The haughty king was enraged beyond measure and the letter was torn to pieces by him. He even went to the length of sending orders to the governor of Yemen for arresting the Prophet. Accordingly the governor named, Bazan, sent two of his men to Medina for effecting the arrest. Hearing the whole news from these men, the Prophet then and there surprised them by prophesying that Chosroes was already dead, which facts turned out to be true, for, Chosroes' own son had assassinated him that night. The Persian Empire was broken up before long, thus, fulfilling the prophecy of the Prophet, who hearing how his letter was torn to pieces by the king, said: " Thus would the kingdom of Chosroes be torn to pieces". (Ibuel Almir, Vol. 2). It is needless to add that the governer of Yaman, instead of effecting the arrest of the Prophet according to the orders of his superior, threw off the yoke of the Persian Empire, and became a follower of Islam.

When the emissary of the Prophet reached the court of Kaiser, Abu Sufyan, the dead enemy of the Prophet and Islam, was also there, and the Kaiser summoned him to his court to enquire about the Prophet. Though he was a deadly enemy to Islam he replied quite truthfully to the various questions put to him, concerning the Prophet and his religion, readily testifying to the righteousness of the Prophet. He told the king that the Prophet came of a high family, that never did he utter a word of untruth, and that the number of his followers was daily on the increase, and he also added

that he strictly kept up to his promises and pledges, fully conscious of their sanctity and inviolability. He also made mention about the admirably unflinching faith of his followers, which aspect by itself must undoubtedly speak highly of the Prophet and his religion. His teaching he said, comprised the worship of the One God, saying of prayers in praise of Him, giving of alms, leading a life of continence and a life of love, charity and common good, and following the ways of truth and uprightness. Such a glowing accounts of Islam and its worthy founder through the mouth of an avowed enemy has its additional value and weight, a testimony to be highly valued and dearly cherished. Small wonder then that the Kaiser was deeply impressed with such an account. Further, about this affair of the Prophet and his religion, he had also a vision of much significance. So, he called together in a conference the important personages of his kingdom belonging to the priestly class and tried to win them over to his views of Islam, clearly convincing them by saying that the adoption of such a religion of high morals would certainly promote and augment their well-being. But the priestly audience only resented at his denunciation of their old creed in favour of a new one, and then in a diplomatic way he pacified them by saying that he was only trying to test their fidelity to their own creed. Thus he had to die without a chance to confess his faith in Islam publicly.

The Quranic verse, concerning the worship of One God, the fundamental principle, may the very pivot of Islamic religion, was inserted in all the despatches of the Prophet that were sent to the

various Kings. The verse is as follows: "Say: O followers of the Book, come to an equitable proposition between us and you that we shall not serve any but Allah, and that we shall not associate aught with him, and that some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah." (3 : 63).

The despatch to Persia that was torn by the Chosroes was couched in the following terms: "In the name of Allah the Beneficient and Merciful, Mohammad the Apostle of Allah invites you.....". Quite contrary to this mad behaviour, we have seen how the Kaiser was much impressed with the noble teachings of Islam and with the exemplary life and character of the Prophet. The king of Abyssinia had already long ago shown his sympathy towards Islam in a practical way by affording shelter in his country to the Muslim refugees from Mecca. So, it was no wonder that he at once embraced Islam at the hands of Jafar who was still there, when he received from the Prophet the despatch inviting him to the worship of One God.

Among the many Arab chiefs who had received the letters of invitation from the Prophet, Shruhbil-bin-Anru of Basra was one. He proved the most aggressive and provocative of all, proving himself even worse than the King of Persia. For he, against all tribal laws and conventions, killed Haris-bin-Umair, the messenger of the Prophet, who was sent to him with the despatch. To kill a messenger or ambassador is in itself a great diplomatic thunder. This audacious act of the Arab chief was nothing short

of an open declaration of war against Islam, a challenge to the Muslims to fight, and so the Muslims without hesitation accepted it. Delay would be unwise and dangerous. The Prophet hurriedly gathered an army of three thousand, and he gave the command of the whole army to Zaid, his liberated slave, himself accompaning the army only as far as the place called Saniyyat-ul-Wida. Just think of this act of the Prophet, giving his slave a high responsible position in the army, solely entrusting him with the command, with many from among the Quraish nobility and from among the Helpers under him. Is this not a typical illustration to show how the Prophet did not care for the so-called difference between the high and low, and how he, on the other hand, readily recognised the fundamental equality between man and man? This equality and brotherhood is one of the fundamental principles of Islam.

Shrubbil, in the meanwhile, had also collected a huge army of hundred thousand men. The two armies came into conflict at a place called Muta, by which name the battle is also known. Zaid fell in the battle, and Jafar took his place. He too fought with extraordinary courage, receiving as many as ninety wounds, and then he also was killed. Abdulla-bin-Rawaha succeeded him, but only to be slain like him. After this, the command was given to Khalid, who by his skill saved the small band of the Muslims from entire extermination. It was in the year 8 A.H. in the month of Jamadi, that this battle was fought.

Mukoukas, the King of Egypt, recieved the Prophet's messenger with all due honour, and though

he did not embrace Islam, he sent some presents to the Prophet including a mule for the personal use of the Prophet, and two slave girls. One of the slave girls, Mary by name, was married by the Prophet himself, thus raising her to a high status—another instance to show how he did not recognise the so-called differences, and how he tried to raise the low and the depressed to a better status and position in life. According to his principle of equality, even the lowest and humblest are capable of achieving highest positions in life. Only man's false notions and false pride of superiority can stand in the way. The other slave girl was married by Hassan, the poet. It is said that the king of Egypt took good care of the epistle sent to him by the Prophet, preserving the same intact within a precious casket. It was a good thing that he did so. The casket, with the despatch in it in perfect, original condition, was recently discovered. The fascimile published exactly tallies with the traditional account.

Those who blindly charge the Prophet with personal aggrandisement and worldly ambition should now pause and reflect and reconsider ; for, here is for them something that will certainly convince them how utterly wrong and thoroughly prejudiced they are in their estimate of this unique personality. Their charge might have some consideration and basis if the Prophet had sent these envoys to those various kingdoms, after his subjugation of the whole of Arabia, but the fact that he sent them long before the same, positively disproves such baseless assertions that are devoid of historic accuracy and personal sympathy.

Let them just look at the real state of things at that time. Only twelve months had passed since Medina was besieged by the enemy, and only very recently they were denied the privilege of performing their pilgrimage at the Kaba, having reached as far as the very precincts of Mecca. They had, according to the truce, yet to wait another year to carry out the intended pilgrimage. The position of the Muslims at that time was, on the whole, anything but strong. It was at such an unfavourable stage in the history of Islam that the Prophet decided about the further propagation of Islam beyond the bounds of Arabia. That such a bold move at that time could never be the outcome of self-aggrandisement and wordly ambition is thus self-evident. So, there must be a stronger, better and nobler motive behind the bold procedure. It was so. The Prophet "had full confidence that Islam would prevail in the long way run, and could forsee the day when its light would illumine very nook and corner of the world." He had that deep-rooted conviction that Truth must triumph in the end, however grim and trying its struggle might be with falsehood. For, truth has potency in itself to hold its own, and does not depend upon an exterior force for its success. Two things are borne out by this event; one that the Prophet was neither an imposter nor an imbecile, but was a true Prophet of God, and the other that from the very beginning the Prophet looked upon Islam as the religion of the whole world. He was, in fact, the only Prophet who had that universal outlook on life, and who was consequently able to propound a universal religion. It was really that divine sense of duty that

inspired him with a divine discontent; for, he was not content with his work in the kingdom of Arabia proper. As to the universality of religion, no other religion except Islam claimed itself to be a universal religion. Jesus himself did not put any such claim, instead he always said that he came to reclaim the lost sheep of Israel, and this is amply proved by the fact that he refused to pray when once a non-Isralite woman came to him begging for prayer. The Prophet on the other hand, proclaimed from the moment of his call that his religion Islam, was meant for the whole of mankind. The Holy Quran itself says as much, and the Prophet spared no pains to accomplish it. His sending of envoys to the courts of different kings was with this object. It was in no way like the claim of St. Paul to the Catholicity of the religion of Christ. The fact that the religion of the West is Christianity neither proves that Islam was not a universal religion, nor can it affirm that it is suited only to the requirements of the East. An assertion of this kind is rediculous, because Christianity was born and bred in the East, and the Israelities for the reformation of which tribe it came, were the inhabitants of the East.

These epistles or despatches of the Prophet were sent to the various kings in the year 7. A.H. To each despatch was affixed the seal of the Prophet, with the words "Mohammad, the Apostle of Allah." By the end of the year 7. A.H. the Prophet went on pilgrimage to the Kaba, according to the term of the truce of Hudaibiyya.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FALL OF KHAIBAR.



E have noted in a previous chapter how the Jews, after being repulsed and checked in their efforts to harm Islam, went into self exile and settled at Khaibar, which was the stronghold of the Jews in Arabia and which was 200 miles from Medina. A good number of the Banu Nazir began thus to settle in this place, a good asylum, no doubt, for the ring-leaders especially. Khaibar means 'fortified', because of its being studded with and surrounded by fortresses, the most important of which was Qamus, supposed to be both inaccessible and impregnable. The Banu Nazir and the Banu Quraiza, who had also now joined them at Khaibar, found a strong ally in the Jews of Khaibar, and all combined together, set to work to devise further means for the destruction of Islam. Having removed themselves to this remote place, they instead of keeping quiet, only became worse and worst enemies of Islam, ever active with their schemes, plots and machinations. The Jews of Khaibar had relations with the neighbouring Bedouin and other tribes, and all these now formed into a big coalition to expunge Islam and the Muslims.

We have seen how in the battle of Ahzab the Banu Nazir succeeded in rousing the Meccans, the Ghatafan, and the Bedouin tribes against the Muslims, and how they even succeeded in enlisting the

sympathy and co-operation of the Banu Nazir. Though the Muslims' power became more strengthened and deep-rooted after the battle of Ahzab, the malice and hatred of the Jews only increased all the more in bitterness and intensity. The seeming humiliating and weak position of the Muslims after the truce of Hudaibiyya only made matters worse, instilling fresher hopes in the minds of the relentless and heartless foes to fight again against the Muslims. Abdullah-bin-Ubayy, the master-hypocrite was ready to incite them, was in secret league with them, keeping them informed of the movements of the Muslims, and ever assuring them that they could still crush completely the power of Islam. So, they formed the big coalition, intending to attack Medina once more.

In the meanwhile, the Prophet came to know about the proposed project of these enemies, and having obtained due confirmation regarding the intelligence, at once sent an army of sixteen hundred towards Khaibar. He wanted to take the fullest advantage of the information he received and he, therefore, launched into prompt and immediate action, lest procrastination should afford the chance to the enemy to march on Medina itself. Ragi, a place between Khaibar and Ghatafan, had its strategic importance as the base-line, cutting off all communications and intercourse between the two places. The Prophet stopped here and left a guard to watch the route, and not to let the neighbouring tribes go to the help of the Jews. The Ghatafan where help was thus checked thanked their gods and

kept quiet; for, they did not want to fight with the Muslims and court defeat. The Prophet continued his march towards Khaibar, thinking that the news of the blockade might induce the Jews to renounce their intention of resistence. But on reaching Khaibar, he found that the Jews were perfectly ready prepared for a good battle. They had fortified all the fortresses including the impregnable one, the Qamus. The Muslims had no difficulty in capturing the smaller fortresses, each in its turn falling easily to them, but when they reached the famous and impregnable one referred to, they found it a hard nut to crack. For twenty days continuously they were engaged in its capture; each day they had to return without succeeding in their effort, with heavy loss of men withal. This prolonged failure to effect the surrender of the fortress could not but tell on them, and such a prolonged resistance on the part of the enemy was something unexpected. All looked dejected and run down. Only the Prophet was hopeful. He knew fully well that the Muslims would in the end succeed. When they all went to him to complain about their successive failures, he consoled them by telling them that the next day he would give the banner and the command to the person who is dear to God and to whom God is dearer, and that person, he assured them, would succeed in capturing the fortress. That night was a night of eager expectation and continuous prayers for the Muslims, for, each one of them prayed fervently that the next day's honour should descend upon his shoulders. (Ibn Hisham: Abulfida: Ibn-el Athir). Next morning they hurried to where the Prophet was, each one hoping against hope that he

would be the chosen one. After all had assembled there, the Holy Prophet beckoned Ali, and with his own hands put the armour on him, handed to him the sword and the staff, and sent him as the commander of the troops for that day's fight. The Muslims had already the fears that this honour would go to Ali, because of his unquestioned capability to fight, yet they hoped, each one of them, that he would be the chosen one. They all went cheerfully to fight and win under the command of Ali, for it is an absolute and positive fact that if they were disheartened at the honour, bestowed on Ali, they would have easily hindered his success that day, or for the matter of that, for many days to come. The fact that Ali that day succeeded to win the fortress shows that nobody bore any ill-will against him, but readily accepted him as their commander for the day. They had no time to fight for such trivialities. When they could accept the leadership of the liberated slave, Zaid, there was certainly no reason for them to object to the leadership of Ali, who belonged to the same noble family of the Prophet, (his cousin and sun-in-law) and who combined in him extraordinary bravery with true and high nobility. Ali, no doubt, by his single bouts with the chiefs and with the tried and picked from among the enemy, effected the fall of the fortress. He was the truly brave, known and acknowledged, and on each occasion he thoroughly justified that he was so.

The Jews had hoped to hold their own and win the battle, but wnen they had to surrender, they came begging to the Prophet to forgive them and to allow them to retain their possessions, with the condition and

promise that half the produce of their lands would go to the Muslims as subsidy. The Prophet, of course, willingly acceded to their request, though he knew quite well that they would never keep up to their word and that they would still continue to carry on their mischievous and treacherous activities. Those who blame that the spread of Islam was effected through the sword, let them here pause and ponder; as a victor he could have very well enforced his religion on them as an alternative to being put to death by the sword. But what do we see instead? Wholehearted and wholesale forgiveness to an accursed enemy of irremediable character. He allowed them to follow their own religion, promising them that the Muslims would not interfere with thir beliefs. He only damanded from them half the produce of their lands as a reparation and as a compensative charge for their protection, which was neither then nor is even now against any national or international rules of warfare.

This was the nature of the mercy and kindness of the Prophet, something unparalleled in the history of mankind. The more the jews tried to harm him, the more merciful he was towards them. But just see how they repaid him for all his extreme kindness with unthinkable ungratefulness and dark treachery. Immediately after the settlement they made with the Prophet, they conspirated to take his life. They instigated one Zainab, the wife of a Jewish chief named Haris, to invite the Prophet to dinner and give him poison. But Divine Providence willed it otherwise, so that the Prophet's precious life may be spared to carry on to the full his cherished sacred mission. No sooner had

he lifted a morsel to his mouth than he was somehow instinctively prompted to refain from tasting it. One of his companions, Bishr-bin-bara by name, who tested the food, died of its poisonous effects.

The conspirators' villainy and treachery was of the highest order, deserving a nothing short of capital punishments, for, they had grossly abused, for no reason at all, his God—and wantonly broken their serious promise and settlement with him. Even putting all of them to the sword for their murderous intentions would be but quite justifiable. But only Zainab, the person immediately connected with the crime, was given the punishment of death, and that too for causing the death of his companion, Bishr, for, if her crime was only an attempt on his life which was providentially averted, he would let her also escape without punishment. What do all these show, his gesture for peace and good will over and over again with an implacable and incurable enemy? He was still hoping to change their hopelessly hostile attitude towards him and his people by sheer force of forgiveness and mercy. It was his earnest and solemn wish to see them in friendly terms with the Muslims. To achieve this supreme object, the Prophet, rightly thought that no amount of sacrifice and compromise on his part was too much for the same. He even took another forward step to secure their friendship. Among the captives in the fall of Khaibar was one Safiyya, the daughter of a chief. He liberated her and himself married her. The marriage by the by was celebrated in the simplest manner possible, the Prophet not even having the means to entertin his friends with a feast

on the occasion. This disproves the baseless story about the fabulous riches that was said to have come into the possession of the Muslims after the fall of Khaibar.

"Treacherous and mischievous as they were, the generous treatment that the Muslims accorded them had no effect on them. It failed to extinguish the fire of enmity in their hearts. They proved a source of perpetual trouble, ever plotting mean tricks to injure the Muslims. Down to the regime of Omar's Caliphate, they never ceased playing an underhand game." They even threw down from the top of a house Omar's son, Abdullah. They had to be exiled to Syria, for, to conciliate such a people was found well nigh an impossible task. Can you get rid of the bitter poison in Nux Vomica by washing it any number of times with sweet milk? No answer is needed.

1. If a daughter is born to a man and he brings her up well he shall be saved from the Fire.

2. Women are the twin-halves of men.

3. There is no celibacy in Islam.

4. The best marriage is that upon which is the least trouble and expense is bestowed.

—MOHAMMAD.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE CONQUEST OF MECCA.

THE truce of Hudaibiyya had been in force for two years. The peace and quietness that prevailed during these two years had considerably helped Islam, marvellously, adding to its strength. Taking advantage of the terms of the truce, the Khuza'a tribe had entered into friendly relations with the Muslims, while on the other hand, their enemies, the Banu Bakr, had entered into alliance with the Quraish. Towards the end of the eighth year of the flight, the Quraish, were growing more and more infuriated at the popularity of the Muslims. One night, the Banu Bakr, with the help of the Quraish attacked the Khuza'a tribe; the latter were taken unawares, and were forced to take shelter within the precincts of the HARAM. According to time-honoured Arab traditions, bloodshed was forbidden within that sacred area. In spite of such a strict prohibition, many of the Khuza'a people were put to death by their enemy even there. The Quraish did not only prevent their ally, the Banu Bakr, from this extremely aggressive and provocative policy, but on the other hand, even rendered all possible assistance thus setting at nought the terms of the truce of Hudaibiyya. In consequence, a deputation of the Khuza'a tribe was sent to Medina, beseeching the Prophet to rise in their defence. The Prophet, after consulting the companions, sent a message to the Quraish with three conditions, asking them to accept one of them. The conditions were: (1) The

Quraish were to pay blood-money for those slain among the Khuza'a tribe; (2) or they should have nothing further to do with the Banu Bakr (3) or they should declare the truce of Hudaibiyya null and void. The Quraish refused to accept the first two, agreeing to the last one. It was rather an unwise step on their part. Abu Sufyan, realising the grave danger for this people for their having so hastily broken the pact, went to Medina himself with a view of asking the Prophet to renew the truce, but he was at the same time deaf to the demands of the Muslims. That was no good, clearly showing a lack of sincerity on his part. The Prophet could very well understand him, and so he refused a renewal of the truce. Abu Sufyan had to return to Mecca disappointed.

For over twenty years the Quraish had been a constant source of trouble and misery to the Muslims. They had three times attacked Medina with the hope of entirely crushing out Islam, but had failed. It was but natural, therefore, that the Muslims should think that it was high time for them to punish those who had done their best or rather worst to bring about their downfall. There was no use of delaying, which would only further spoil the situation, affording further advantages to the enemy. So, the Muslims commenced busy and immediate preparations to launch an attack on Mecca, calling together all those tribes that were in alliance with them. The Quraish were quite unaware of this. One of the Muslims named Hatib, who had some relations at Mecca and who was anxious about their safety, secretly sent a messenger to them with a letter informing them of what the

Muslims intended doing. It was rather an ill-timed and unwise procedure. If the letter had reached the Quraish, they would have also made the necessary preparations for a battle, probably resulting in unnecessary blood-shed and loss of lives. But Providence willed it otherwise, and somehow the Prophet was informed about the letter secretly sent by Hatib. He immediately sent men who overtook the messenger and brought back the letter. The Muslims were much excited at the treachery of Hatib, and they were for inflicting a severe punishment on him. But as he was sincerely sorry for what he had done, the Holy Prophet readily forgave him. "It was indeed to be an imperishable example of forgiveness–forgiveness shown to deadly enemies".

On the 10th of Ramazan, 8 A.H. the Prophet set out, at the head of ten thousand followers, thus fulfilling what Moses had said announced two thousand years ago. His Divine words were these : "He came with ten thousand of Holy ones." (Deut. 33:2). There is no other event in the post-Mosaic history fulfilling these prophetic words. "What a marvellous phenomenon ! The Muslims count ten thousand strong and are at the same time all 'righteous' as foretold." They did not encamp until they reached Marr-uz-Zahran, a place only a few hours journey from Mecca. The Prophet ordered huge fires to be lit in every camp. This gave the Quraish the impression that the strength of the Muslim army was considerably greater than it really was, and they consequently surrendered without any attempt at resistance. It was a conquest effected without a

battle and without an armed resistance, and without shedding a drop of blood—a unique, peaceful conquest.

The first to be brought to the Prophet was the hard-hearted and haughty headed leader of the Quraish, Abu Sufyan, a veteran enemy of Islam, who took the place of Abu Jahal as the most confirmed and hardened foe of the Prophet and his followers working and fighting tooth and nail against them for twenty-one long years. "The Prophet's merciful nature made no distinction between friend and foe", between the thickest friend and the deadliest foe. Much to his own surprise, Abu Sufyan was readily pardoned. To what sublime height his mercy and forgiveness had reached! The Prophet also guaranteed safety to all those who entered his (Abu Sufyan's) house or the Kaba, or those who remained within closed doors of their houses. Only a year and a half had passed since Abu Sufyan spoke at the court of the Kaiser those memorable and truthful words about the high and unsullied character and personality of the Prophet. Ever since, that time, the truth and beauty of Islam had already stirred his heart. "Now his own utter helplessness notwithstanding all his power, the final triumph of Islam in spite of its want of resources, and above all, the generous forgiveness of the Prophet—all these considerations convinced him of the inherent force of Islam. The heart which had remained sealed against Islam for twenty long years, now opened to the truth, and Abu Sufyan embraced the faith".

Returning to Mecca, he told the people of the safety guaranteed by the Prophet, and also informed

them of the great strength of the Muslim army, pointing out to them the utter futility of offering resistance to such an army. The Muslims then advanced on the city of Mecca, entering the city from various sides. Sa'd-bin-Ubeda, who was commanding a detachment, passing by Abu Sufyan, shouted: "To-day is the day of fighting. It is not a day of safety for Mecca." This was something unwarranted, and it is needless to say that the Prophet was highly displeased at his behaviour that might have led to unnecessary bloodshed which he wanted to avoid. So, the man was forthwith deprived of his command and the standard was given to his son, Qais. Khalid with his detachment had to pass through that part of the town where the worst and deadliest enemies of Islam lived, Ikrama, the son of Abu Jahal, being one of them. Notwithstanding, the announcement of the Prophet guaranteeing safety to all the citizens, they having thus nothing to fear from his army, the bitter enemies would not allow Khalid and his band of men to pass in quietly, but were bent upon disturbing them with a shower of arrows and stones. Khalid was thus forced, as a matter of sheer defence, to attack them, though it was against the strict orders of the Prophet. In the skirmish two Muslims were killed, and the casualities on the enemy's side were from thirteen to twenty-eight. In the meanwhile, standing on a raising ground of the city, the Prophet was amazed and shocked to see Khalid's men with unsheathed sword fighting at the other end. But on hearing Khalid's explanation as to how he and his men were forced to such a situation and action when he could not but use his

discretion, despite any standing and strict orders, the Prophet was satisfied and pleased with this perfectly reasonable explanation,

The Prophet then purified the sacred House, the Kaba, of all its countless idols of stones. Ever since that time not a single stone image entered into that sacred house again. Touching each idol with his stick, the Prophet recited this Quranic verse: "Say, the Truth had come and falsehood has vanished. Verily, falsehood is but evenascent." (17.81). Then turning to the "Place of Abraham" he offered his prayers there. He next sent for Osman-bin-Talha, who was the custodian of the key of the Kaba. The House was opened, and entering the same, the Prophet offered prayers there also. He, returning the key to Osman, said to him that the sacred place would ever remain in future in his and his descendants' charge.

After this, the Prophet gave a sermon about the beautiful unity of God and about the underlying principle of unity between man and man,—about universal brotherhood. Afterwards, he spoke at a special gathering of the Quraish. "They were before him in the capacity of offenders. What tortures had they inflicted upon the Muslims? It seemed as if the very soil of Mecca was thirsting for the Muslims' blood. What horrible pains the Muslims were put to, to the disregard of all moral and traditional laws! The very recollection of the fantastic forms of persecutions sends a thrill into one's heart. Again,

their high-handedness was not merely confined to the soil of Mecca, but they persued the Muslims wherever they fled to take shelter. Repeated attacks were led against Medina to smash them. So heinous was the guilt of the Meccans now standing for justice before the Prophet! Malicious, vindictive destroyers of the fundamental rights of man, oppressors of the innocent, the Meccans deserved the most exemplary punishment under the most humane law." To put to death by the sword the ring-leaders, and to imprison a number of others, would have been, under the circumstances only the mildest form of punishment, meeting the end of justice in the most lenient way. And there were soundest grounds for the Muslims now to take due and full vengeance on their enemies for all their past barbarities and atrocities. "Strong is the instinct of revenge in the nature of man and it is apt to run riot, particularly when the foe lies at one's sole mercy. Then it transgresses all moral limits."

But the Quraish though they were the bitterest enemies, had nevertheless that implicit faith in the noble and merciful nature of the Prophet, for, they had never seen him otherwise. They knew they had no fear of harsh treatment from him. So, when the Prophet asked them what punishment they expected him to give them, they replied: "thou art a noble brother, and the son of a noble brother." And the Prophet said: "This day there is no reproach against you." The full Quranic verse, being what the Prophet told them, runs like this: "There shall be no reproof against you this day; Allah may forgive you and He is the most Merciful of the merciful". (12:92)

Though the Quraish were only too fully aware, as pointed out, of the Prophet's unparalleled large-hearted nature, which had been the distinctly distinguishing mark in him even before he assumed prophethood, and which had only shone more and more in him with added lustre in dealing with the worst enemies, yet his present treatment towards them who had but been his undiluted and incessant persecutors, was something beyond their wildest dreams or expectations. They were simply dumb-founded and they could not believe their own eyes. For all their unpardonable crimes, they were not only to have any punishment at all, deserving as they did the most exemplary punishment, but were to be freely set free even without a reproof. Nor did the Probhet even take a pledge from them binding them to good behaviour in future. He did not try to recover from them all those properties of the Muslims who had left them behind when they left the city, seeking refuge in places like Abyssinia and Medina. He asked his Muslim companions to forego such things. Ikrama, who only quite a short time back, had been at the head of those who attacked Khalid and his detachment without any reason, was also forgiven. He, however, had fled for life somewhere and was in hiding, expecting to be traced and killed any moment. His wife, on his behalf, approaching the Prophet, implored for his forgiveness. The Prophet informed her to tell her husband not to have any fear or anxiety, for, he was forgiven. Hinda, who had chewed the liver of Hamza, the Prophet's dear uncle, and Wahshi her negro slave, who was the murderer of Hamza, were also shown the same leniency. Look how he pardoned even the person

who had ultimately caused the death of his own dear daughter. She was once going from Mecca to Medina. On the way, she was so badly pelted with stones by one Habbar that the injuries at last proved fatal to her. World's history has not produced another similar personality with such an extraordinary record of forgiveness, magnanimity and mercy reaching the sublimest heights. No wonder then that the Prophet has been given titles he well deserves, such as the "Best of Humanity", the "Pride of Mankind", and the "Mercy for the Nations". Really he came as a mercy to the whole world. "This breadth of human sympathy and the magnanimous forgiveness is not met with in the life of Christ.....He never acquired power to deal with his persecutors".

Thus Mecca was conquered and was at last in the hands of the Muslims. What a conquest and what a generous treatment extended to the fallen foe! It was a glorious and grand spiritual conquest, the great, final triumph for Islam at a place where it had to struggle the hardest during its infancy, where it was threatened to be throttled to death. Now the Prophet by his characteristic clemency and magnanimity, had completely conquered and captivated the hearts of all people, clearly showing the moral excellence of Islam through the mighty moral excellence of his own character, through his ideal treatment torwards the conquered and fallen. This last scene of Islamic magnanimity disarmed thoroughly all oppositions. In short, all oppositions had now melted away and vanished out of sight. How could there be darkness when the sun of Islam was glowing full in all its

lifegiving and soul-thrilling effulgence? All untruths and wickedness now gave way to truth and righteousness. For those who live nearer to truth and righteousness are surely living nearer to God, and the efforts of such people who work in the name of God and Truth, cannot but be finally crowned with success. The Meccans were one and all deeply impressed with the truth and beauty of Islam. The true light and the light of truth now flashed in them, showing them the Right Path. Batches after batches embraced the faith of Allah.

Witness the Prophet, seated himself on a prominent part of the Mount Safa, to welcome everybody into the fold of Islamic brotherhood! What an impressive and moving sight it must have been! There they go, males and females, in large numbers, a continuous stream of humanity. It is a sight for God and angels. To picture to oneself such a glorious and divine scene is to realise the imperishable moral greatness of the man and of the religion that he came to propound and establish. Can this be called conversion by the sword? The very thought and the very question that way is absurd. All these hundreds of conversions without any exception, were but spontaneous conversions of spontaneous hearts. There were some who did not wish to become Muslims and they were allowed to be so, to keep to their own idolatrous creed, and the Muslims treated them with all kindness. These non-Muslims fought shoulder to shoulder with the Muslims at the battle of Hunain. "Thus the conquest of Mecca is a conclusive reputation of the charge that

Islam was ever propagated at the point of the sword ; for, could there be a more favourable opportunity for such conversion ? Regarding this point, even a writer like Muir, has to say thus : "Although the city had cheerfully accepted his authority, all its inhabitants had not yet embraced the new religion, nor formally acknowledged his prophetical claim. Perhaps he intended to follow the course he had persued at Medina and leave the conversion of the people to be gradually accomplished without compulsion".

The triumphant entry of the Prophet into Mecca was unique. Just imagine how he had to leave the city thirteen years ago as a helpless fugitive, to save himself and his infant faith from the wrath of his own people. As long as he was there, the Quraish had done all they could to kill him and to crush out Islam. The city where he was born, the city where he first received the Divine call, the word of God, where he first preached that word of God, the city from where in the end he was driven away and which he left with a heavy heart, now lay at his mercy, conquered without shedding a drop of blood. It was not only a religious triumph of the first order, but was also equally a great personal triumph. By it, the Quranic prophecy about the successful entry of the Holy Prophet, was truly fulfilled.

The final triumph of Islam as seen in this unique conquest of Mecca is also a triumph of the Prophet's unshakeable faith in his sacred cause. He not only never doubted the ultimate success of his mission, but he even went so far as to believe that even his worst

enemies would surely one day come round to his side. The conquest of Mecca shows how he was thoroughly justified in holding such a wonderfully optimistic view of men and things. Witness him now seated on the Mount Safa and contrast this triumphant situation with his three days' stay in the cave with his companion, Abu Bakr ! Even there in the cave, when their lives were at every moment trembling in the balance, he exhibited the same unshakeable faith, consoling his companion by saying, "Surely Allah is with us". His secret of success in life lies in this abundant and ever-present faith and optimism. The conquest of Mecca represents the culminating point of this aspect in his character. He conquered all difficulties and he conquered the worst enemies. Why ? faith—faith—faith—. It was the man with this sort of faith that sat on the Mount Safa. He sat on the Rock of faith. Look at him again and again !

1. Kill not your hearts with excess of eating and drinking.

2. Never drink wine; for it is root of evil.

3. Abu Moosa said, "O Prophet of Allah, I am in a land where people make a liquor of honey, which they call Bita and a liquor of barley, which they call Mizr." The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, replied, "Everything which intoxicates is unlawful."

4. Whoever drinks liquor Allah will not accept his prayer.

—MOHAMMAD.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE BATTLES OF HUNAIN AND TAIF.

THE Hawazin was a tribe occupying territories to the east of Mecca. Some time before the conquest of Mecca, this tribe had been exciting the Bedouins and other tribes to rise against and attack the Muslims. Now seeing that Mecca had fallen and was in the hands of the Muslims, they decided together to gather a large number and strike a blow at Islam, before it became too strong for them to do so. In fact, they had already begun to show signs of restlessness when the Muslim position began to improve after the truce of Hudaibiyya. The Hawazins themselves were a war-like people. They were brave and experienced warriors, well-skilled in archery. It was only a few days affair for them to bring together a strong and big army.

It was about a month after the conquest of Mecca that the Holy Prophet was informed of what the Hawazin, the Bedouins and the other neighbouring tribes, were preparing to do. On hearing of these preparations he at once sent a messenger to watch the movements of these tribes and find if there was really any truth in the statement. He soon returned confirming the news and gave the Holy Prophet details of what was going on.

As there was no time to be lost, the Muslims immediately gathered together to scatter the enemy. The

Muslim army was twelve thousand strong, including two thousand Meccans. At the head of their big force, the Prophet marched out of the city of Mecca towards the valley of Hunain, where it was reported the Hawazin had encamped.

It may be mentioned here that the Muslims set out on this expedition with that sort of extreme confidence that amounted to over confidence, quite sure of returning victorious. To them victory was already a foregone conclusion. They imagined that the enemy's forces would flee from the field the moment they saw their mighty army, or that they would unconditionally, unhesitatingly and immediately surrender to them. This sort of self conceit or over confidence was but natural under the circumstance. Only very recently they had an easy conquest over Mecca, and in the other previous battles, too, they were uniformly victorious, despite all their weakness. Such continuous success had turned the heads of many of them. This time, the great triumph of their army, together with the knowledge that they are well and fully equipped, turned their heads all the more. They needed thus timely warning and correction at the hands of Allah, who was at the back of all their victories. They have forgotten in their pride this central Divine factor. He wished to teach them a lesson and bring them down to the proper level. So, when the battle of Hunain commenced, they had unexpectedly a bitter experience, in spite of all their superiority of strength and equipment. Luck was very much against them; they had a set back. It looked as though they were to be defeated. The

Holy Quran refers to this situation in the following words: "Certainly Allah helped you on many battle-fields and on the day of Hunain, when your great numbers made you vain, but they availed you nothing, and the earth became strait to you, notwithstanding its spaciousness, then you turned back retreating." (9:25).

The Hawazin were noted for their skill in archery and they were, besides, occupying favourable positions in the battlefields. The best archers among them were posted well on the surrounding hills. As the Muslims advanced, they were met with showers of arrows from all sides, while the main portion of the army attacked them from the front. The Meccan auxiliaries, including Muslims and non-Muslims under the command of Khalid, were the foremost in the fight, and so they were the first to be attacked. They could not stand the fierce attack from the enemy's arrows. They fell back; their retreat caused terrible disorder among the following Muslim ranks; one detachment fell over the other in utter confusion. Even the detachments of the Refugees and the Helpers followed those who were retreating, thus adding to the confusion and chaos. When such was the deplorable state of affairs among the Mulims, the Holy Prophet, with but a small band of men, firmly stuck up to his post with admirable tranquillity and courage. "The enemy was fast sweeping upon him, and he was almost all alone, but that did not cause the faintest ripple on the serenity of his mind. Was he not secure under the Omniscient protection of the Mightiest of the Mighty? The same unfailing source of solace-unswerving faith in Divine help and implicit conviction in the final

triumph of his cause sustained him now as usual." He shouted again and again at the top of his voice, "I am the Prophet; there is no untruth in it. I am the son of Abdul Muttalib." Abbas, who was with him, also shouted in his loudest voice: "O hosts of Helpers! O the companions of the tree!" These magical and magnetic words had their desired effects. They had put fresh spirit into the minds of the retreating men. They were drawn towards the place where the Prophet was standing and they all again rallied round him replying, "Labbaik," meaning "Here we are at thy command." They threw themselves off their camels and horses and desperately attacked the enemy in all fury. Gradually, the enemy were losing ground, a portion of them had already taken to their heels and fled, the rest offered resistence for a short time; but seeing their standard-bearer falling dead, they also turned and fled.

Before undertaking this expedition, the commander of the Hawazin army, (his name was Malik) who was a youth of only thirty years, had ordered that the army should be accompanied by all the women and children, and their cattle. He thought that their presence would keep up the spirits of the fighting men, persuading them to fight the hardest and preventing them from turning their backs. But they left all these behind, women, children, cattle, and everything, at that dark hour, when forced to retreat. Therefore, it was a very great booty that fell into the hands of the Muslims. Over six thousand men and women were taken prisoners. Besides, twenty-four thousand sheep and four thousand

ounces of silver also fell into their hands. After keeping this booty in a place of safety, the Muslims went after the defeated army. A part of the army had taken refuge in their fortress called Autas. The Prophet sent a small detachment of Muslims there to dispel them. But the largest portion of the enemy's army took shelter within the walls of the city of Taif, which was well fortified with battlements and strong stone walls. The Hawazins had taken sufficient precautious measures in preparing for the battle of Hunain, to meet all emergencies and to pull on without difficulty, if the worst were to happen in the shape of defeat. They did not overlook to store provisions enough to last many, many months, as well as different kinds of weapons for war such as catapult etc. And all around the city were posted strong garrisons. The Holy Prophet with his Muslim army straight away proceeded there and besieged the town. The Muslims learnt to make use of the new weapons with the help of certain tribes. Since the Hawazin army was quite secure and well-provided within, the siege dragged on for months together. So, it became a wearisome affair to the besiegers. The Prophet called together a meeting of all his friends to decide what was best to be done. An old Bedouin chief made the pertinent and pregnant observation that it was a very difficult thing to capture the fox that was safe in its den and that, therefore, to leave it alone would be the best policy: meaning how well the Hawazin had provided themselves and that it was not likely that they would surrender so easily or quickly, and that if they were left alone, they would attempt no further harm to the Muslims. The Prophet then

ordered the siege to be raised; for, the sole object of this expedition as well as of their similar expeditions, was only to safe-guard Islam from the attacks of enemies. Someone asked him to invoke the anger of God on the fallen foe. These was the very same place where the Prophet was once mercilessly pelted with stones. Then also he was informed that Divine punishment would be meted out to his enemies if he so desired. But what did he do then? Bleeding all over his body he poured out with a bleeding heart his melting prayer to God. In the same way he now prayed to God in their behalf thus:— "O my Lord! grant light to the tribe of Saqif and bring them to me," that is, to my faith, to Islam. His prayer was granted for, these very people later on embraced Islam voluntarily. What a deep love for mankind, a heart ever overflowing with that purest and sweetest milk of mercy, free from malice, free from hatred, anger, or revenge, even towards the worst enemies! Here is the acid test of true greatness.

That the Prophet thus left the enemy to themselves by discontinuing the siege clearly shows that neither the annexation of territory nor much less the propogation of religion was his motive. The situation was not so hopeless. He could have continued the siege a few days more which could surely enable him to subjugate the enemy completely. That in this battle non-Muslims fought shoulder to shoulder with the Muslims is in itself a strong argument to show how propagation of faith through conquest was not the motive at all. The truth is that the Hawazin and their neighbouring tribes threatened Islam. And so, for the

protection of Islam, this war, like the other wars, was undertaken, as a purely defensive measure. When that object was attained and when it was found that the enemy could do no more harm to them, they were left to themselves and the siege was abandoned. The enemy afterwards voluntarily embraced Islam. When they forced to do so? The moral is plain.

Returning from Taif, the Holy Prophet set aside one fifth of the booty for the public Treasury, and the rest he divided among his army. After thus distributing the booty, he made certain grants to the Bedouin Quraish chiefs. This gave rise to a feeling of resentment and discontent among the Helpers from Medina. They grumbled among themselves and said that the Prophet had been partial to the Quraish, because they were his own kinsmen. The Holy Prophet hearing this, sent for them and spoke to them, and the Helpers admitted having grumbled. He then spoke very kindly to them, and explained things, ending in these words: O Helpers! If all the people in the world go one way, while my Helpers take another, I, the Prophet of Allah, will tread along the path of the Helpers. This outburst of the Prophet greatly moved the Helpers, and they burst into tears of joy, knowing that the Prophet did care for them more than others, more than all riches of the world.

In his childhood, the Prophet was looked after by his nurse, Halima, and he always had a good affection for her and her family. Now among the captives, he was surprised to see her daughter, his foster-sister, Shaima. Recognising her, he at once

rose and spread his mantle for her to sit on. He treated her with every kindness as though she was his own sister. He even asked her to accompany him to Medina; but she told him she preferred to go to her own people. So, she was sent back with valuable presents for herself and her family.

A deputation of the enemy waited upon the Holy Prophet to secure the release of the six thousand prisoners. Any other conqueror, under the circumstances and according to the best and even the most civilised rules of warfare, would not have cared at all for the deputationists' requests. He would have simply refused to see them, or would have turned a deaf ear to their pleadings, refusing to comply with their wishes. "But the Prophet's heart was cast in a nobler mould. His mercy knew no bounds. The enemy had as good a claim on the Prophet's extensive (and unlimited) mercy as any other human being. The Prophet's heart would melt at the smallest human misery. How could he bear the sight of the sufferings of thousands?" Immediately he ordered the release of those prisoners that belonged to his share and the share of his family. As for the rest who had fallen to the share of others, he said he could not take the liberty of ordering their release, but promised to do his best in the affair. See how he recognised the equality of rights for all! He never wanted to encroach upon the liberties and rights of theirs. While he himself was quite willing and ready to forego his share, he never thought of imposing on others the self same sacrifice. But he was fully aware that his followers who had so far so loyally and truthfully

followed him and his words, sacrificing their all, homes, properties, and everything, even their very lives, would surely follow his lead, releasing the rest of the prisoners also who belonged to their share. Nor could he let go in vain the slightest chance or opportunity that might mean the release of the rest of the prisoners as well. He could not rest content till he tried his best in this direction. He was keenly feeling himself for the distressed, and wanted to give the most sympathetic consideration to the request of the deputationists. So, during the afternoon prayers, he addressed his Muslim congregation, requesting them to be merciful and to release the prisoners who had fallen to their share. This they willingly agreed to do. The Prophet's intercession and his personal example had the desired effect. All those, six thousand prisoners were, therefore, set free without any stipulation or condition, and were allowed to go back to their homes. Is this not something unprecedented in the military history of the world–this unprecedented gesture of spontaneous mercy, when human nature will be only quite unwilling to part with a rightfully obtained possession? And six thousand prisoners is not a small possession withal. If the Prophet had the motive of conversion in him through conquest, here was the best opportunity—six thousand prisoners is to be converted to Islam. The enemy was in great distress. They wanted back their people. The Prophet could have very well told the deputationists that the prisoners would be released only on condition they embraced Islam. But he didn't do anything that way. That is the true historical fact. Yet blind and obstinate prejudice is ever

bent upon drawing unwarranted and unreasonable conclusions, despite all clear historical statements and facts. "It is so painful to see one who was the embodiment of mercy and tender heartedness portrayed as a blood-thirsty muderer, with the Quran in one hand and a sword flashing in the other, to strike off the head of the reluctant to accept the BOOK".

It may be worth quoting here in detail the convincing speech of the Prophet to the Helpers to remove their unfounded misunderstandings about him, with regard to his generous grants to some Quraish and Bedouin chiefs; for this speech shows how he always followed the ideal and true path to righteousness, pointing out how such a great soul would never think of conversions through conquests. This was his speech: "Is it not true, that I came in your midst while you were misguided; so Allah guided you to the right path. You were indigent; Allah made you prosperous. You were ever at daggers drawn with one another; Allah created mutual affection in your hearts. You could also give me a different reply, and you would be quite justified in doing that; you could say that I came over to you when I was belied and rejected by my own people, and you accepted me. I came to you when I had no one to help me, and you stood by me. I was turned out of my home, and you gave me shelter. O Helpers! Did it make you suspicious that I gave away a portion of worldly pelf for the purpose of conciliation, thinking that Islam was already an ample reward for you. O Helpers! Do you not like that you should take home with you the Apostle of Allah

while others may drive goats and camels to their homes. By Allah, who holds my soul in His hands, if all the people should go away, while the Helpers take another, I will tread along the path of the Helpers".

When thus the Helpers themselves, persons who were always in close contact with him, with his ideal personality and character, misunderstood him in this way, is it any wonder then that many writers who might have only second-hand and half digested materials, take all the trouble only to misinterpret this wonderful personality to the world. But were not the Ansars disillusioned and were not their eyes able to see again the naked truth? Similarly, Modern Europe, may the whole world itself, cannot but now admire the marvellous life and career of this towering personality who has left an imperishable record for all ages to come. Carlyle, himself, a lover of truth and sincerity, was one of those who was able to find out the great, true hero in this great Prophet. Many have followed in his wake, and Muslim scholars and writers of undisputed repute like Syed Ameer Ali and Khwaja Kamal-ud-din have utilised their talents to the best in this direction. Islam and its author now stand fully and rightly vindicated, once again, raised to that irreproachable eminence and excellence.

The best of alms is that which the right hand giveth, and the left hand knoweth not of.

MOHAMMAD.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE FURTHER SPREAD OF ISLAM IN ARABIA.

IN the month of Zu-qad in 8. A. H., the Prophet visited Mecca on his way back from Taif. He performed a Pilgrimage there called "UMRA OR MINOR Pilgrimage" and then returned to Medina at the end of the year. The name "Umm-ul-Qura" was given to Mecca. It means, "the mother of towns." It was still the great spiritual capital for the whole of Arabia. Year after year, thousands of people used to gather together there from all parts of the country during the months of pilgrimage, and the people of Mecca were considered leaders in the matter of religion. The Quraish, therefore, wielded no small influence in this direction. That these people now, once the bitterest enemies of the Prophet and his religion, who wanted to crush him and his religion at any cost, have one and all voluntarily joined his brotherhood, and that the Prophet thus had ultimately succeeded in an almost impossible task, did, no doubt, create considerable conviction and confidence in the minds of the people in general. They wanted proof and they wanted the Prophet's own people to be convinced of his mission first. The wonderful phenomenon had taken place; Mecca fell and the Prophet captivated the hearts of all, his unbounded mercy flooded the whole region of Arabia, not of Mecca alone. The hero stood triumphant before them, who fought for years together single-handed, with that single aim in view,

unswerving and unmoved, despite repeated persecutions and wars. So, they came to him now in large numbers from all parts of Arabia, readily and willingly joining his faith, fully convinced of the eternal truth behind Islam. Tribe after tribe turned to the right path. This general spread of Islam took place in the year 9. A.H.

It was in the same year that the Prophet organised the collection of the poor-rate from all the tribes who had joined the fold of Islam. The payment of the poor rate is obligatory on all Muslims. Under this organised establishment were many collectors who went out among the various tribes for collecting the poor rate. This tax is the main item that went to replenish the Public Treasury or Bait-ul-mal, which was controlled by the central authority. Once, the tax collectors going to a certain tribe, realised from them for the poor-rate a flock of sheep and cattle ; but a non-Muslim tribe usurped the same from them. So, the Muslim tribe had to attack them, taking fifty of them as prisoners.

The tribe of Banu Tamim had assisted the Prophet in the battle of Hunain. They now sent a deputation to Medina to wait upon the Prophet. The speakers and poets from among the deputationists were overpowered by the Muslim speakers and poets whose central theme of discussion was Islam, creating a deep impression on them. In short, this tribe too accepted the faith of Allah. The only hindrance to Islam was that old-standing prejudice, barring a tribe here or a tribe there from entering the new fold.

During the years 9 and 10 A.H. Islam thus commenced spreading with wonderful rapidity, taking a firm foot-hold everywhere. It was during this time also that the Prophet heard that the tribe of Banu Tayy were bent on making mischief and causing trouble to the Muslims. At once Ali was sent with two-hundred soldiers to put an end to this. Many were taken as prisoners, among them was Saffana, the daughter of Hatim Tai, a man well-known for his kindess and generosity. The Prophet on hearing this, set Saffana free for the sake of her father. But she being the true and worthy daughter of a great father, was not satisfied with getting her freedom, granted to her with all respect and honour. She told the Prophet that she did not want her freedom, unless her fellow female prisoners also were similarly set free. The Prophet granted her request and all the prisoners were forthwith liberated. Her brother, who had run away for life to Syria, was informed by her of the Prophet's breadth of outlook and of his genuine sympathetic nature. At once, he repaired to the Prophet and embraced Islam. He was made the chieftain of his tribe.

Kaab-bin-Zuhair, a famous poet, who was once a bitter opponent of Islam, had also during these days become a convert to Islam. He earned an immortal fame by composing a poem, called Burda, in praise of the Holy Prophet.

Soon Islam won general popularity throughout Arabia. Its message of peace and good-will to all, spread far and wide, every pilgrimage to Mecca

carrying the message farther and farther. People had been interested for many years in the struggle between the Prophet and the Quraish. They were aware of the fight and of the hard times that followed for the Muslims. They knew how for years and years the enemies of Islam had tried their utmost to crush and put an end to it. And now, deputations poured in from all parts; they were received with kindness and due honour, and were taught the principles of Islam. They came from the very borders of Persia and Syria, from far off places like Yaman, Hadramut, Bahrain, Aman and others. Thus we see that in time of peace, Islam spread rapidly by leaps and bounds, while as long as there was warfare, with attendant unsettled conditions, its progress was at a standstill.

So rapidly was Islam spreading and growing that it seemed as if some invisible power was busy bringing hundreds upon hundreds into the Muslim brotherhood. Another fact to be noted is, that although deputations came from unsafe places, asking for instructors, never did the Holy Prophet send armed escorts etc. He sent his preachers alone and unarmed, for he felt quite convinced that no harm would befall them.

This chapter may fittingly be closed with a few pertinent lines from Muhammad Ali's book. He says; "What a perversion of facts! Ignorance and prejudice attribute the spread of Islam to the instrumentality of the sword: While the fact is that the progress of Islam was at a standstill so long as a state of warfare prevailed.....This is a

fact which has, by an irony of fate, been to this day intentionally misrepresented. Religious freedom and peace have ever favoured and will ever favour the spread of Islam."

1. Charity that is concealed appeaseth the wrath of Allah.
2. He who helpeth his fellow-creature in the hour of need, and he who helpeth the oppressed, him will Allah help in the Day of Travail.
3. A man's giving in alms one piece of silver in lifetime is better for him than giving one hundred when about to die.
4. Charity is a duty unto every Muslim. He who hath not the means thereto, let him do a good act or abstain from an evil one. That is his charity.
5. Every good act, in which one is approaching to the Court of Allah, is charity.
6. It is indispensable for every Muslim to give alms. The companions said, "But if he hath not anything to give?" He said, "If he hath nothing, he must do a work with his hand, by which to obtain something, and benefit himself; and give alms with the remainder." They said, "If he is not able to do that work to benefit himself, and give alms to others?" The Prophet said, "Then assist the needy and oppressed". They said, "if he is not able to assist the oppressed?" He said, "Then exhort people to do good" "And if he does not?" He said, "Then let him withhold himself from doing harm to people; for, varily that is as alms and charity for him."

MOHAMMAD.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE BATTLE OF TABUK AND THE SEQUEL.

THUS Islam marched with galloping speed throughout the length and breadth of Arabia, carrying on with marked and marvellous success its peaceful conquest of conversions. This unprecedented, triumphant march, was a matter of no small concern and anxiety to the neighbouring Christian states, especially to the great Roman Empire, and they grew jealous of this rapid and menacing growth of Islam, that had already reached up to the borders of Syria. They were thinking of bringing the whole of Arabia under Christianity. Now, not only this had become an impossibility, but on the other hand, the positive and creditable achievement of Islam there, meant a grave and great menace to their Christian religion and the Christian states. Some Christian states had already entered the fold, and more may follow suit. Under the circumstances, they thought that a consolidated attack on Arabia would at least hamper this menacing growth of Islam. So for this purpose, the Kaiser collected under him a huge force, all the Christian tribes in Arabia contributing their mite for the same. The tribes of Ghassen especially proved a dangerous thorn in the way of Islam.

The Prophet heard of these deliberate preparations for a war against Islam by the Kaiser and his other Christian confederates. Islam must be defended and protected. So, he sent an expedition to the Syrian

border, for it was best as a matter of defence to keep the enemy outside the territory of Arabia, and not to allow them time for an invasion of it. Having despatched an expedition, therefore, to guard the frontier, the Prophet called upon all the tribes to come to the help of their motherland and to defend their sacred faith, both of which were threatened with subjection by the foreigners. But there were very many obstacles in the way for all to participate in the common cause. The journey was long, the heat was insufferable, and besides, the crop was standing in the fields ripe and ready for cutting. Many who were poor had not the means to provide themselves with horses or camels, nor was the Prophet himself in a position to make these arrangements for them. It is needless to say that the transport arrangement for such a huge army could not also be managed adequately for want of the necessary means. But then, somehow, there came a timely help, for, Osman offered for the expedition, thousand camels and ten thousand dinars. The Prophet was then able to despatch an army of thirty thousand. The army started from Medina in the month of RAJAB, 9. A.H. It may be noted here that many had the fear of facing the well-trained and well disciplined Roman army. The Quran mentions about this tedious journey in the following words : "Had it been a near advantage and a short journey, they would certainly have followed thee, but the tedious journey was too long for them." (9:42).

After about a fortnight's journey, the Muslim army encamped at a place called Tabuk, that lay

between Medina and Damascus, awaiting to hear further fresh news about the movements of the enemy, but no news came. So, the Prophet and his army marched on to the frontier only to find it peaceful, with no foreboding of war. After all, the projected big combined invasion of the enemy, ended in nothing. At the last moment, they gave up the attempt, tribes like the Ghassan, Lakhm, Juzam and others withdrawing from the same. Perhaps, their spirits were damped, because of seeing the huge Muslim army of thirty thousand, and they might have also recollected how on a previous occasion, in the battle at Muta, the three thousand Muslim army successfully faced an army of hundred thousand. Seeing how these Christian tribes lagged behind at the last moment, the Kaiser too had to drop the idea of an invasion. Thus ended the intended battle.

Here again was another chance for the Prophet to effect conversion by force, if such was his idea. And here was also another good opportunity for him to bring under him the Christian tribes and their territories if he so willed, for, they would have surrendered themselves to him unconditionally even without a fight. But neither conversion nor territorial aggrandisement was his motive. When Islam was threatened to be crushed, it was his duty to defend it by all means and at all cost. But now the enemy had abandoned completely their idea of a fight with the Muslims. To fight with the enemy when they were not prepared for it, showing definitely a gesture for peace, was to transgress the limit and to go against t he Quranic injunction that says clearly thus: "And

fight in the path of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress." (2:190). The Prophet waited at the frontier for twenty days, just to find out and know for certain if the enemy really meant not to fight, and when he was fully satisfied that there was nothing but a peaceful atmosphere all around, he returned with his army to Medina, after concluding certain mutual agreements with many of the petty Christian tribes. Is there such an example in the history of any other religion or government? A vast tract of land was lying at his feet. Only a dash forward with his mighty army was needed. But he was not bent that way. The moral is clear.

Such a failure on the part of a great power was not without its salutary effect. It could not but create a deep impression in all about the real stamina and strength behind Islam, consequently restraining the evil intentions of those who were still wanting to see the disappearance of Islam. Islam had already established itself so firmly that no amount of further repeated attempts could shake it a bit. It was growing, on the other hand, stronger every day. Deputations after deputations from different parts of the country began to wait upon the Prophet. The first deputation to Medina was from Taif. In the course of the battle with the Hawazin, the Prophet had to lay siege to Taif, because the enemy took shelter there ; but when they meant no harm, he had to call off the siege and return to Medina. The chief of the Saqif, Urwa, went to Yaman to qualify himself in the art of warfare. He had known the qualities of the Prophet, and had already a good inkling of his striking personality and

character while he was present at the truce of Hudaibiyya. So, immediately after his return from Yaman, he went to Medina and embraced Islam, and ever since that time, it was one of his foremost and deep concerns to see that his own people too embrace Islam. The Prophet tried his best to dissuade him from this futile attempt, fearing he would be harmed, and having in mind his own bitter experience at the hands of such people. But Urwa did not heed to this just and timely warning from the Prophet. He miscalculated his influence over his people, and finally he had to pay dearly for this with his life. He went back to Taif and invited all the people there to accept Islam. The event proved that the Prophet was quite correct in his apprehension about the safety of Urwa. For, early the next morning, when he called out the people to prayer, some surrounded his house and killed him with showers of arrows. This incident resulted in a skirmish between the people of Taif and the Hawazin tribe who had by that time joined Islam. The people of Taif at last realised that it was of no use of opposing Islam that was day by day growing in number and importance. So, a deputation from Taif, consisting of six chiefs and twenty others waited upon the Prophet to express to him their willingness to embrace his faith. Here again the magnanimity of the Prophet's character is seen, for, he never even uttered a word about the murder of Urwa. They requested him that they should be allowed to keep with their chief idol, Lat, for three years more, pointing out to him that its immediate destruction may cause a heavy strain on the religious susceptibility of their women folk and the ignorant among them. The Prophet, of

course rejected such a proposal in toto ; he could not allow them even a month that way. To compromise idolatry with the religion of Allah even for a moment was something unthinkable to him. The Prophe, sent one Mughna for the destruction of the idolt since its worshippers believed that they would come to grief if they were to destroy the idol themselves· Thus Islam penetrated into Taif also, a place brought with the bitterest memories for him, from where he had to return, bleeding heart, soul and body. How spotlessly pure and extra-ordinarily magnanimous must be his heart when he could accommodate in his religion such a merciless lot! He could have very well refused to have nothing to do with them who once insulted and disgraced him and his religion so unpardonably.

Another deputation with the same purpose that came this year was from the Banu Tamim. The others who followed suit and joined Islam were the chiefs of Yaman, Mahra, Aman, Bahrain and Yamama. This led some of the Christian tribes also to send deputations to the Prophet, requesting to be converted to Islam. The Christians of Mahra and Yaman joined the faith. The Christian tribe, Banu Hanifa also sent their delegations to the Prophet. The Banu Taghlib sent a deputation of sixteen persons. But the most well-known Christian delegation was the one from Najran that sent seventy members, with Abdul Masih of the tribe of Banu Kinda and Abdul Haris of the Banu Haris as the chiefs. These people were of the Roman Catholic Church. While the other Christian delegations were

given lodging arrangements in the houses of the various Muslims, this delegation was specially honoured by being allowed to put up in the Prophet's mosque itself, and the Members were also allowed to perform in the same place their rituals and services according to their faith. To the invitation of the Prophet to join Islam, they said they would first hold a discussion. The Prophet then explained to them clearly the fundamental principles of Islam, yet they were not satisfied. So, the Prophet invited them to a 'Mubahala'. They were not bold enough to take up this challenge of a 'Mubahala', for they feared that in it they would lose and the Muslims with their righteous cause would win, and they were not also willing to forsake their own faith. So, they returned without embracing Islam, having entered into an agreement with the Prophet. But what is meant by 'Mubahala'? This is a resort to Divine decision when a religious difference reaches a stage that does not find a way of settlement through discussions and arguments. The two parties address their prayers to God to the effect that the wrong party may be visited with some heavenly calamity which will be a warning to others.

With this ended the year 9th A.H., to be followed by more deputations during the next year. A good many from the different tribes of Yaman came and embraced Islam, the tribe of Bajila deserving special mention. This tribe had its own temple called the Zul-Khulasa, known as the Kaba of Yaman. The Temple was called after the name of the idol 'Khulasa'. The idol, like many other idols, was, of course, pulled down and destroyed.

Then came the deputation from the Hadramut tribe. The deputationists led by the chiefs, Wail and Ash'as, were clad in silk costumes. The Prophet asked them whether they would like to join Islam, and they told him that that was the purpose of their deputation to him. He wanted them to put away their gaudy dress, and they did so unhesitatingly and willingly. They were all admitted into the fold of Islam. Perhaps, the Prophet wanted to test the depth of their sincerity before admitting them into the fold, and he, perhaps also wanted to impress upon them the superiority of sincerity and simplicity over trifling and meaningless worldly gaudiness. "It was not merely to teach certain morals that the Prophet had been commissioned. His mission was to uproot every vice and social evil. He embraced and abolished all the long prevailing corruptions and gave a distinct Islamic tone to the whole fabric of society. At a single stroke he raised a fallen humanity from the depth of ignominy, purified them of all their evil habits and imbued them with the pure and simple ways of Islamic life. In fact, he infused an altogether fresh life into them.

In this manner came deputations after deputations from different tribes and clans, and each when returning took a preacher, so that the principles of Islam may be properly inculcated and spread among their people. Still, here and there, were some left, who had not embraced Islam and who were still entertaining fond hopes of striking a death-blow at Islam. Two of such bitter anti-Islamites, Amir and Arbad by name, decided to attack the Prophet sudden

and unaware, and kill him. It was planned that Amir should engage the Prophet in conversation, while his companion, Arbad, would fall on him all of a sudden and strike him dead with the sword. With this diabolical intention they went out and happened to meet the Prophet. Amir, as previously planned, engaged the Prophet in conversation, but Arbad was not courageous enough to carry out the damned, dirty part allotted to him. Seeing how his plot, after all, failed for lack of courage on the part of his companion, Amir then begged the Prophet to grant him an interview in private, which the Prophet flatly refused. This enraged him, and as he was the chief of a mighty tribe, he told the Prophet that he would avenge for this insult, threatening to attack him with a mighty force of cavalry and infantry. Hearing these words, the Prophet only prayed to God for protection, saying, "O Allah! protect me from Amir," and strangely enough on his way back this bitter enemy died of plague, before he could be again among his people.

The period of warfare ended with the expedition of Tabuk, and after that we have seen how tribes after tribes began to embrace Islam. Within the short time of two years, the whole of Arabia was thus united under one religion, Islam, with very few exceptions of Jews and Christians scattered in small numbers here and there. "The cry of Allah-O-Akbar resounded on all sides." Thus ended the mission of the Prophet, with unprecedented and undiluted success to his credit. He was the only person who saw such a complete fulfilment of his mission in his own life time.

This was the great reward for the great hero and Prophet who never doubted the success of his mission, who pushed forward on and on, despite all difficulties and temptations, ever with hope, faith, and optimism. What an alluring and inspiring personality! I cannot help saying LA ILAHA ILLALLAH, MOHAMMAD RASOOL ALLAH.

1. The love of the world is the root of all evils.

2. Allah offered to change all the pebble-stones round the city of Mecca into pure gold for me, but I answered "O Lord all I ask is to be hungry one day and satisfied the next. The day I am hungry I will implore Thee and the day I am satisfied I will thank Thee. What have I to do with the worldly wealth? I am like the traveller who lieth down in the shade of a tree and goes away from that tree never to return. O Allah! Let me die poor and resuscitate me in the ranks of the poor.

3. This world is a prison for the faithful, but a Paradise for unbelievers.

4. Cursed is this world and cursed is all that is in this world, except the remembrance of Allah and that which aideth it.

5. Hell is veiled in delights and Heaven in hardships and miseries.

--MOHAMMAD.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM.

THEIR FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES.

WE have noted in the last chapter how the consolidated effort of the various Christian tribes under the leadership of the Kaiser of Rome, after all, ended in nothing, many Christian tribes joining the fold of Islam after the battle of Tabuk. By the year 10 A. H., Islam had thus firmly established itself throughout the length and breadth of Arabia, and even beyond its borders. The battle of Tabuk may be said to represent the last phase of the struggle, Islam's struggle with the neighbouring states professing the Christian faith. Islam's righteous cause was, in fact, testified to even in its earlier days by the Christian king of Abyssinia when he gave shelter in his kingdom to those Muslim refugees. It may not be out of the way here to point out in brief the fundamental differences between Christianity and Islam. The obvious and the greatest difference is in the two different beliefs, the Unity of God of the Muslims, and the Trinity of the Christians.

The Quran mentions about the Mission of Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity. The Holy Book says that he was sent by God to reclaim and bring back to the right path the lost sheep, that is the Israelities, who were the followers of Moses, but who had deviated from his path. The circumstances under

which Jesus was born are unique ; for, he was born to Mary, a virgin. This scene is described in the Quran in the following words: "And mention Mary in the Book when she drew away from her family to an eastern place ; so she took a veil (to screen herself) from themselves ; then We sent to him Our inspiration, and there appeared to her a well-made man. She said : 'Surely I fly for refuge from you to the Beneficient God if you are one guarding (against evil).' He said : 'I am only a messenger of your Lord : That I will give you a pure boy.' She said, 'when shall I have a boy, and no mortal has yet touched me, nor have I been unchaste.....' And the throes of child-birth compelled her to be taken herself to the truck of a palm tree..... and she came to her people with him (child). They said : 'O Mary ! Surely you have done a strange thing.....But she pointed to him (child). They said 'How should we speak to one who is a child in the cradle.' He (child) said : 'Surely I am a servant of Allah. He has given me the Book and made me a Prophet.....' Such is Jesus, son of Mary..... .. . It beseemeth not Allah that He should take to Himself a son. Glory be to him ; When He has decreed a matter He only says to it 'Be', and it is....." (Ch. III : Sec. 5). This is the correct account of the nature of Christ, that he was a Prophet of God like many others, and this much the Muslims are bound to acknowledge as a part of their creed.

Christ himself never claimed divinity or relationship with God. It was after his death, to bring in the

pagan Romans, that St. Paul, the Vicar of Christ introduced the idea that Christ was the son of God, conceived of the Holy Ghost, making it later the chief article of Christian faith. As pointed out, Christ himself did not mention anything about his divinity, and this fact can be borne by the books of Chrysostom and Athanasius. Speaking of the sonhood of Christ, Gibson writes: "The familiar companions of Jesus of Nazareth conversed with their friend and country man, who in all the actions of rational and animal life, appeared of the same species with themselves. His progress from infancy to youth and manhood was marked by a regular increase in stature and wisdom, and after a painful agony of mind and body he expired on the cross. He lived and died for the service of mankind; but the life and death of Socrates had likewise been devoted to the cause of religion and justice.....The Prophets of the ancient days had cured diseases, raised the dead, divided the sea, stopped the sun and ascended to Heaven in a fiery chariot. And the metaphorical style of the Hebrews might ascribe to a saint or martyr the adoptive title of the Son of God." Thus we see the real aspect of the affair expressed by a Christian himself. Corinthus of Asis tried to amalgamate the two views about Christ, the Divine, and Christ, the man, into one, which was improved and modified later by Carpocreates, Basilides and Valentine. They regarded Jesus Christ as the mere mortal, the legitimate son of Joseph and Mary, but they said that when he was baptised, the real Christ, the Son of God Himself, descended on him in the form of a dove, and that Christ, the immortal, forsook

his earthly tabernacle, to suffer, to complain and to expire. Gradually, the idea of the divinity of Christ became firm, yet the Christians hesitated to pronounce that God would manifest Himself in flesh, or that He could get confined in the womb of Mary. If we are to accept it, we will have to admit that, being Immortal and Almighty God, He was not exempt from ignorance and that He in the end expired from the Cross. How could God expire Christians can only squibble in vain to show. These are the two entirely contrary things and can never be together. To be both ordinary human being and God at the same time is impossible. Yet this doctrine was the prevailing one of the Church in the fifth century. And is still the greatest obstacle in the way of Christian and Muslim reconciliation.

Christians to-day, in fact, are idolators, and this is the second great difference between them and the Muslims. Christ himself did not permit image worship (as we have said he came to reform Israelites) and was himself subject to the Laws of Moses, which strictly forbade the worship of images. The early Christians too were not image worshippers; on the other hand, they had a repugnance for the use of images. Not only this, they also used to point against the idolators for their foolishness in bowing before the workmanship of their own hands. The first symbolic worship was started three hundred years ago after the death of Christ, and in the beginning it was confined to the veneration of the Cross and the relics. About the inauguration of the image worship among the Christians, a Christian writer says: "At first, the

experiment was made with caution and scruple and the venerable pictures were discreetly allowed, to instruct the ignorant, to awaken the cold, and to gratify the prejudices of the heathen proselytes. By a low though inevitable progression, the honours of the original were transferred to the copy. The devout Christians prayed before the image of the saint, and the pagan rites of genuflexion, luminaries, and incense again stole into the Catholic Church. The few scruples they had before, were rendered unnecessary by the strong evidence of visions and miracles." It was to satisfy the mind of the people that the Vicars of Christ sanctioned idol worship, instead of educating them to abhor it. We would only be lengthening this chapter if we are to go into all the details about the different things concerning the Christian belief and practice. But for those who are anxious to have a fuller knowledge of this, the following books, namely HISTRY DES EGLLES, REFORMERS, LAMPRIDIUS, and HEATHEN TESTIMONIES, would be sufficient. It is enough for our purpose here that we have shown that the religion of Christ as preached by him became an entirely different one at the hands of his successors.

Another great difference between Christianity and Islam is that the former has a priest-hood, while the latter has no such thing. No Christian can worship his Creator and God without the help of the priest, while a Muslim can do so, and does so. Thus, advantage over the people made the Christian priestly Class very strong at the same time very jealous of its powers. The hardships this class meted out to all,

irrespective of rank, position, influence and knowledge, were such that it is no wonder they became hostile to Islam. When we said that the neighbouring Christian states were watching the progress of Islam, we meant the priestly class, the clergy was watching it, for to them it meant disaster if Islam penetrated into those states. They could not tolerate this.

The true, appreciative, and beautiful picture and estimate of Jesus Christ, as given by the Khwaja Kamal-ud-din, in his book, "The Ideal Prophet," may be worth quoting here as a concluding paragraph to this chapter. "Jesus has begun to stand again as a man neither as God nor as His Son in the estimate of the thinking minds of the West, and the Modernist is merely formulating progressive opinion in general. He is a true messenger of God, and one of the Muslim Prophets. He may or may not be an Ideal Prophet, but he is decidedly a sublime character, all gentleness, selflessness and humility, distressed with human troubles, but facing all temptations in manly wise; humble in station but courageous enough to expose hypocrisy in the higher ranks of society; insulted and persecuted, yet bearing it with meakness and patience; serving his friends and praying for his enemies; working wonders, yet never taking pride over them; ascribing them always to 'the finger of God', and even admitting other's ability to do the same; ever frank to admit his shortcomings; a true Prophet of his time who realised the social canker eating the heart and poisoning the life-blood of his people, and came with a remedy. Like Socrates and other martyrs to truth, he lived and died in the

service of religion. Though somewhat exclusive in his sympathies, seeing that they were primarily for Jerusalem and her children. 'The tears he shed over his people may be estimated as the purest indication of his humility.' What a noble and uplifting character in many ways! But if we take him as God, his very achievements soil the Divine glory, and if anything, detract from the Divine dignity; all the grandeur, beauty and sublimity dwarf into nothing."

1. Riches are not from abundance of worldly goods, but from a contented mind.

2. A man asked teach me a work, such that when I perform it Allah and men love me. "The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) replied: "Desire not the world and Allah will love you; and desire not what men have, and they will love you."

3. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) slept upon a mat, and got up very marked on the body by it: and I said, "O Messenger of Allah! If thou hadst ordered me, I would have spread a soft bed for thee." He said, "What business have I with the world? My condition with the world is that of a man on horseback, who standeth under the shade of a tree, then leaveth it."

MOHAMMAD.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE MEMORABLE PILGRIMAGE.

BY the year 10 A.H., the whole of Arabia had come under the complete sway of Islam. There was not anywhere the least trace of polytheism and its attendant idolatrous practices. Not a single idol was spared. The religion of Allah now reigned supreme everywhere. The Prophet had thus perfectly and fully fulfilled the cherished and divinely-appointed mission of his life. Divine words came to him to testify to this fact, which said, "This day I have perfected for you your religion, and completed my favour on you." (5:3) It was indeed a momentous and memorable occassion, a glorious stage in the annals of Islamic history. Such an occasion was fittingly celeberated by the Prophet by going on a pilgrimage to Mecca, accompanied by as many as 124,000 persons from all corners of Arabia and belonging to all tribes. There was not a single polytheist among this huge army of pilgrims. In fact, this momentuous pilgrimage was a sort of proclamation regarding the complete conversion of Arabia into the Islamic creed. It was the final, farewell pilgrimage of the Prophet; he had reached the goal of his life's pilgrimage, and ere long he was to take farewell of this world itself. This was the deep purport of the Divine words quoted above. What a glorious and grand achievement does this farewell pilgrimage denotes. It was the greatest success a person could achieve. For, the very spot where he stood

surrounded by 124,000 devoted pilgrims was the self-same place from where he had to flee for life, almost helpless and alone. "What an inspiring manifestation of Divine power," and of sincerest human endeavour!

So, there could be no better occasion for the Prophet to broadcast about the perfection of his religion, to give a gist of his creed. "This was the assembly which had met there for the sole object of Divine glorification, cutting asunder all worldly ties for the time being. This was a congregation where human equality ruled supreme, where no mark of distinction between the king and the peasant was to be noticed, where all met as fellow-brethren to do homage to their Lord on high, and where every heart was filled with Divine awe." Therefore the sermon that the Prophet delivered then was remarkable in many ways, immortal words ringing and ringing through ages. Seated on a camel, he spoke to the vast assemblage of pilgrims who were gathered there around him on the field of Mina. His words were repeated aloud, so that they could be heard at the farthest ends of that vast assembly. The memorable sermon and message ran thus :—

"Ye people, listen to my words, for I know not whether another year will be vouchsafed to me after this year to find myself amongst you."

"Do you know what day is it to-day? This is the **Yaum-un-Nahr** or sacred day of Sacrifice. Do you know which month is this? This is the sacred month.

Do you know what place is this ? This is the sacred town. So, I apprise you that your lives, your properties, and your honour may be as sacred to one another as this sacred day, as this sacred month, and as this sacred town. Let those present take this message to those absent. You are about to meet your Lord who will call you to account for your deeds."

"This day all sums of interest are remitted, including that of Abbas-bin-Abdul-Muttalib. This day, the retaliation for all murders committed in the days of ignorance is cancelled, and foremost of all, the murder of Rabi-bin-Haris is forgiven."

"O people ! This day Satan has despaired of re-establishing his worship in this land of yours. But should you obey him even in what may seem to you trifling, it will be a matter of pleasure for him. So, you must be beware of him in the matter of your faith."

"Then, O my people ! You have certain rights over your wives, and so have your wives over you..... They are the trust of God in your hands. So you must treat them with all kindness.....And as regards your slaves, see that you give them to eat of what you yourself eat, and clothe them with what you clothe yourselves."

"O people ! Listen to what I say and take it to heart. You must know that every Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. You are all equal, i.e., enjoy equal rights and have similar obligations. You are all members of one common brotherhood. So i

is forbidden for any of you to take from his brother save what the latter should willingly give. So, do not tyrannise overy your people, i.e., do not usurp their rights".

The Prophet then thus exclaimed: "O Lord, have I conveyed Thy message?" Every one present there, without even one dissenting note, in one voice affirmatively replied, "by our Lord! Verily thou hast." The valley, resounding with this ready reply from thousands and thousands of mouths, seemed to further corroborate and affirm their statement. The Prophet then said: "O Lord! I beseach Thee, bear Thou witness unto it." What a glowing message! What a marvellous mission! What a grand achievement! Verily, his whole life was a great sacrifice in the cause and service of Allah. May His peace and blessings be ever on him.

1. "He is not of us who doth not order that which is good, and prohibit that which is bad."

2. "He who trieth to remove the want of his brother, whether he be successful or not, Allah will forgive his sins."

3. "The best of men is he from whom good accrueth to humanity."

—MOHAMMAD.

CHAPTER XXX

THE LAST DAYS.

THUS the Prophet returned from Mecca after performing the memorable, farewell pilgrimage. He had given his final message and sermon to the world, and Divine revelation had already informed him that he had perfected the religion, which clearly meant that his mission in life was over. Now he was only looking forward to meet his Lord. About the end of Safar 11 A.H., he fell ill. Yet to the last moment, he was not keeping quiet without work. He had ordered the despatch of an expedition to the Syrian border under the command of Usama, son of Zaid, himself entrusting him with the standard and men like Abu Bakr and Amar being placed under him. Even the very eve of his earthly existence, he wanted to demonstrate and emphasize the great principle of human equality, the beautiful brotherhood among mankind.

The army was lying encamped outside Medina, but its further progress and advance had to be postponed for a time, because of the growing illness of the Prophet which caused no little alarm and anxiety. With the consent of all his wives, he now stayed in the house of Ayesha. Till the last moment, Ayesha was even by his bedside, nursing him. Even at such a time when his health was too weak to do any work, he used to go to the mosque to lead the prayers. What a high sense of duty! One day,

before he came out of his house to go to the mosque, much water was poured over his head, and there was also a bandage around his head. That day after prayer, he addressed the congregation and said that Allah had offered him the choice of life on earth and a life with Him. and that he had accepted the latter. Abu Bakr was the first to comprehend what he meant by this, and tears rolled down his eyes at the thought of the inevitable separation from his beloved master, whom he had accompanied at that memorable flight, and with whose life-long activity and mission, he had ever wholeheartedly identified himself.

The next day, the Prophet grew weaker still. Hearing Bilal's call to prayer, he tried to get up and prepare himself to go to the mosque as usual. But he found it impossible; he was so weak. He wished Abu Bakr to lead the prayer, and even after the excuse put forward by Ayesha on behalf of her father, saying that he was too weak and that his voice was consequently too low, adding that he would burst out into tears, when reciting the Quran, possessing as he did the tenderest heart, he insisted upon following his direction, and Abu Bakr started leading the Muslim at the prayers. One day, feeling a little better, he raised the curtain of his room and stood at the doorway, observing the people offering prayers. His countenance beamed with supreme satisfaction. His very soul thrilled with inexpressible bliss. "He saw with his own eyes how devoutly and humbly those whose guidance was entrusted to him, bowed and prostrated before Allah, even in his absence." Seeing this sign of the Prephet's recovery, people felt no

anxiety about him and his health, and they took to their normal pursuits, Abu Bakr also leaving the place for Sunnah to visit his family there. But in a short time, the prophet had a relapse, and it became almost certain that his end was near at hand. A sudden change was visible in him. His strength began to decline rapidly. His last words of prayer that came out in whisper were, "Lord! blessed Companionship on high." Having faithfully carried out his sacred duty on earth, " he now returned to the loving bosom of Companionship on High." He breathed his last on Monday, the 12th of Rabi-ul-Awal. May He, the Lord on High, ever shower his choicest blessings on him! May he rest in peace and eternal bliss.

The sad news of the demise of the Prophet spread like wild fire, and Omar who had seen him in better condition a few hours before, refused to belive it and thought that it must be an unfounded rumour of a malicious and maschievous person. With his sword unsheathed, he said in a challanging mood that he would kill anybody who was bold enough to say that the Prophet had passed away. Abu Bakr, seeing this confusion, went immediately to the house of Ayesha. There he came to know that the sad news was but quite true beyond doubt. Kissing that beloved fore-head of the departed hero, he said: " God will not bring death twice upon thee." Then returning to the mosque and mounting the pulpit, he addressed the congregation thus: " O People! Verily, whosoever worshipped Mohammad, behold! Mohammad is indeed dead. But whosoever worshipped Allah, behold! Allah is alive, and will never die." It was no

easy affair and it required no small courage and presence of mind to utter these words in an atmosphere heavily charged with intense excitement and Omar was there ready to cut off the head of any who would dare to give out such a news. Then Abu Bakr appeased the people with a timely sermon, using the following Quranic verse as the central theme. He quoted: "And Mohammad is no more than an apostle; All apostles have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heels?" (3: 143). "Prophet or non-Prophet, everybody must depart from this earthly abode, sooner or later; Allah alone and none else but Allah is everlasting." This fitting and timely moral sermon about the evanescence of everything excepting Allah, went straight into the hearts of those who had embraced the religion of Allah. The soothing balm had its immediate effect. The storm of excitement was brought down, and all minds were cooled and calmed.

"There was not any messenger sent before me by Allah to mankind but found friends and companions, who embraced his maxims and became his disciples; after which were born those who gave out precepts which they did not practise, and did what they were not ordered to do: therefore those who opposed them with the hands, with the tongue and with the heart are believers, and there is not anything in Iman (Faith) be sides this, even as much as a grain of mustard seed."

—MOHAMMAD.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE PROPHET'S WIVES:

ISLAM AND POLYGAMY.

Blind, prejudiced, and adverse critics of the Prophet, whose only aim is to sully and slander his name and character in season and out of season, have naturally spared no pains to give to the world a distinctively distorted and false impression about his various matrimonial alliances. Just hear what Sir Willian Muir says:

"In his youth he is said to have lived a virtuous life. At the age of twenty-five he married a widow forty years old, and during her lifetime for five and twenty years he was a faithful husband to her alone.... Shortly after the death of Khadija, the Prophet married again; but it was not till the mature age of fifty four that he made the dangerous trial of polygamy by taking Ayesha, yet a child, as the rival of Sauda. Once the natural limits of restraint were overpassed, Mahomet fell a prey to his strong passion for the sex. In his fifty-sixth year he married Hafsa; and the following year, in two succeeding months, Zeinab-Bint-Khozeima and Omm Salma. But his desires were not to be satisfied by the range of a harem already in advance of Arab custom, and more numerous than was permitted to any of his followers; rather as age advanced they were stimulted to seek for new and varied indulgence. A few months after his nuptials

with Zeinab and Omm Salma, the charms of a second Zeinab were by accident discovered too fully before the Prophet's admiring gaze. She was the wife of Zeid, his adopted son and bosom friend; but he was unable to smother the flame she had kindled in his breast; and, by divine command, she was taken to his bed. In the same year, he married a seventh wife also. And at last, when he was full three score years of age, no fewer than three new wives, besides Mary the Coptic slave, were within the space of seven months added to his already well-filled harem. The bare recital of these facts may justify the saying of Ibn Abbas: 'Verily the chiefest among the Moslems (meaning Mohamet) was the foremost of them in his passion for women;'—a fatal example imitated too readily by his followers, who adopt the Prince of Medina, rather than the Prophet of Mecca, for their pattern."

We have quoted, no doubt, a pretty long paragraph, an irresistible temptation, but quite reasonable and even extremely necessary. See in what a black colour the great personality is painted, without taking into deep and proper consideration the why and wherefore of the whole affair, without trying to weigh and analyse facts in the light of his life and career as a whole, with its marvellous deeds only more marvellous achievements in the teeth of struggles, temptations, oppositions, persecutions, wars, and what not! Could he come out as one of the world's greatest prophets and heroes if he was leading the sort of dissipated and degenerate life as depicted by Muir? If his life and career was not of the ideal type, beyond

doubt and reproach, could he have ever hoped or dreamt of inspiring his followers with that unquestioned loyalty and undoubted confidence in him and in his great cause? A licentious man can never hope to become the centre of such an irresistible attraction. A towering personality of his type **ipsofacto** bespeaks lofty and noble character. Even his bitterest enemies had nothing to say against him. Was not Abu Sufyan one of his confirmed foes? Yet, in what glowing terms he spoke about the Prophet before the Kaiser of Rome! The hero of many struggles, internal and external, the hero who saw in his own lifetime the ultimate success of his cherished mission in life, could never be made out of mere licentious stuff.

To study carefully, sympathetically, and dispassionately the life of this wonderful hero, is to know what an ideal, self-controlled, and self-denying life he was leading throughout, despite the divers matrimonial alliances he had to contract, in each of which he was solely guided by the loftiest and noblest motives, political, ethical and religious. Not to gauge correctly this important aspect of his life is to misread and misjudge his sacred life mission itself. So far as he was concerned, plurality of wives was never synonymous with a loose life. The following Quranic verse clearly shows how a deep, spiritual relation existed between the Prophet and his wives, and how he made them understand that the so-called worldly pleasures and worldly life were not to be expected from him if they desired to be his wives. The Quran says thus: "O Prophet! Say to your wives; if you desire this world's life and its ornature, then come, I

will give you a provision, and allow you to depart a goodly departure. And if you desire Allah and His Apostle and the latter abode, then surely Allah has prepared for the doers of good among you a mighty reward. And keep in mind what is recited in your houses of the communications of Allah and of the wisdom." Inscrutable, strange and varied are the ways of Allah, and he ensures the due fulfilment of His mission on earth through different channels. Certain teachings of the Prophet, especially those concerning the womenfolk, could with better facility and advantage be spread through his wives, and who else but his wives could be the best and surest testimony as to how far he practically applied in his own life his various teachings. In the bosom of his family where he could be quite at ease and in his best element and spirit, he could preach and put in to practise many things "There are a hundred and one morals of a man that do not find manifestation but in relation to the fair sex. Again there are certain points of Islamic law which appertain to the female sex exclusively, and cannot find promulgation but through members of the same sex. In order that the world might not be deprived of those sayings and doings that could only find expression in the household, and in order that these things might be handed down to posterity, it was assigned to the Prophet's wives to watch all they heard or saw, and communicate the same to others. Thus the Prophet's marriages were intended as a means towards the realisation of a religious object of great importance..... ...It was a part of Divine wisdom to have so arranged to ensure the preservation of the Prophet's teachings, in precept as well as in practice.

This is the deep purport of those providential marriages as hinted in the Quranic line, "And keep in mind what is recited in your houses of the communications of Allah and of the wisdom." The Prophet's wives were thus intended as a means to strengthen and supplement his great, sacred mission in life, and this sublime task and low, worldly pleasure cannot go hand in hand, as pointed out in the Quranic verse quoted above. When this is the underlying truth and purpose of these marriages, see what a self-evident distortion of facts under lies in what Muir says in the following words: "Once the natural limits of restraint were overpassed, Mahomet fell a prey to his strong passion for the sex.....But his desires were not to be satisfied by the range of a Harem already in advance of Arab custom, and more numerous than was permitted to any of his followers; rather, as age advanced they were stimulated to seek for new and varied indulgence." Facts are facts, and despite such false and baseless accusations from men like Muir, truth cannot be hidden for a long time. As we proceed further down this chapter, these cobwebs woven of studied misinterpretations, would be cleanly swept away, flooding every mind with the pure light of truth.

Mohammad, the Prophet, was an Ideal Husband. Each and every letter of these two words deserve to be capitalised in bold, black types. Why not in glittering letters of pure gold? His domestic life is an exceedingly remarkable phenomenon, something unheard of in domestic history. What an ideal relation existed between him and his many wives...no hitch, no hindrance, no wrangling, but throughout

undiluted domestic felicity! Just imagine what a highly cultured character he must have possesed! Generally, many are the jarring notes in an ordinary family life. With two wives, even emperors have admitted their failure in domestic life. Then what to say of a life with many wives? Amidst all the misrepresentations and misinterpretations regarding the Prophet's domestic life, the striking phenomenon of his ideal behaviour referred to, amidst a family of many wives, is altogether purposely ignored and overlooked. That he led the simplest and the most abstemious life when he was surrounded on all sides by all sides by all sorts of pleasures and prosperity, when he could have commanded any kind of convenience and comfort, is a factor of no small importance in discussing this vital question. Says Ayesha: "For a whole month together we did not light a fire to dress victuals: our food was nothing but dates and water unless anyone sent us meat. The People of the Prophet's household never got wheat bread on two successive days." It is said that the Prophet and his family had to be in a hungry state for many nights together. Ayesha also adds "that the Prophet never knew what it was to satisfy his hunger all through the period beginning with the flight and ending with his death."

Certainly, this cannot be the way of a licentious man. The same simple, abstemious and self-controlled life is one of the striking characteristics in the Prophet's career throughout, not of his Meccan period alone. Despite the many marriages he had to contract, he was ever the great hermit and Prophet,

fully conscious of the great trust imposed upon him and never swerving from the high ideal he kept in view. Arabian society was then thoroughly and deeply immersed in gross immorality immediately and sickening debauchery, yet the Prophet's youth was stainless beyond question. Did not the Quraish themselves try to tempt him with the offer of the most beautiful women and other attendant pleasures of life? If he was inclined that way, was not that the best opportunity for him? Marrying Khadija, a woman senior to him by fifteen years, he used to spend most of his time in lonely, solemn meditations. It was truly a spiritual union, and he led such a life till his fifty-second year, never marrying another till the death of Khadija. Taking carefully and dispassionately all these facts into consideration, is it not something absurd and unreasonable to suggest that the Prophet became all of a sudden licentious in an advanced age and that the Prophet in Medina was not the same as the Prophet in Mecca. Blind prejudice goes to such an extreme that naturally it is not able to see and appreciate the beautiful connecting link between the Prophet's life in Mecca and his more arduons life in Medina. Khwaja Kamal-Ud-Din aptly answers Sir William Muir thus: "The life in Mecca had been a life of adversity, of trial, of worries; in Medina it was a life of success and of prosperity. And herein lies a lesson for the Muslims of today. Their condition is more like the Prophet's experience in Mecca; it is a time of trial. But if they persevere, if they show high morality, if they come out faithful, if they become united and active, if they be but true to themselves, to their brethren, to their faith, to their Prophet and to

their God, they will meet with the same success that came to Mohammad."

The Prophet's life in Medina was full of anxieties and worries, incessantly struggling against foes, internal and external. Is it possible that under the circumstances he could ever lead a loose and careless life in the bosom of his family? Were not these marriages self-imposed ones, meaning only additional troubles and anxieties for an old man? To suggest that he sought pleasure in life through these marriages is only to suggest what did not take place at all. In that case, his life and career in Medina would have run through quite a different channel. He would never be the conqueror of Mecca, and the fate of his faith, Islam, would be otherwise. He and his religion still live and flourish in the hearts of millions and will continue to do so for ever. The religion of GOD can never perish, and such an imperishable religion founded on truth, righteousness, and reason, can never be the work of a licentious man. Self-control is the basis of all success and power, and this self-control he did possess in an immeasurable degree. Not to admit this, is only to miss the central beauty and attraction in his marvellous life and career, landing oneself in inconsistencies. To find inconsistency in the course of his life, simply because he married many women, is the greatest inconsistency and injustice possible. This will suffice, we hope, to point out how the adverse critics' baseless arguments regarding the plurality of the Prophet's wives can be clearly met with by an array of well-known historical facts.

Approaching this important aspect of his life in a more detail and concrete form, we can arrive at the following, definite conclusions. Firstly, the Prophet had as his wife only Khadija till the ripe age of fifty-two. Secondly, with the exception of Ayesha, the only virgin among his wives, all the others were widows or divorced women, whom he was bound to protect, and through marriage only he could extend that legitimate and best protection under his roof. Among these, five were helpless Muslim widows whose husbands had sacrificed their precious lives in the sacred cause of Islam. Three of the wives, were from the enemy tribes; with a view to effect reconciliation with them, the Prophet effected matrimonial alliances with them. In all his marriages, the Prophet was guided by the best and noblest of motives. Besides, the question of protection, it was difficult in those days to get widows remarried. "A reformer with whom morals are all in all, could not content himself with making provisions merely for their eating and drinking. The Prophet was jealous of their chastity, far more than of their physical needs. It became therefore, necessary to sanction polygamy under the circumstances. This is the reason that the Prophet had to take a number of wives in the Medinite period of the life. We must note that all his wives were either widows or divorced women. Where self-indulgence is the motive, the choice seldom falls on widows. Passion needs virginity for its gratification. And there was no dearth of virgins. It would have been an enviable privilege for any Muslim to be the father-in-law of the Prophet. But the object was for nobler one-the protection of widows of his friends.

By the bye, plurality of wives is not something peculiar to the Prophet of Arabia alone. All the great Prophets had many wives–Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, and Solomon. The last named had in hundreds. Jesus was of course, an exception, for he had not even one. The Holy Prophet himself had proved in his life that monogamy is the best ideal to be followed under normal conditions, for, he had only one wife till his fifty–second year. But he was a supremely practical and far–seeing reformer. He, with his gospel of a universal religion, had to be an example in all walks of life under all sorts of circumstances, and he wanted to point out that polygamy as such had no instrinsic evil. Is not man by instinct and nature polygamous, as the German writer, Max Nordean, apply and rightly points out, though for all outward purposes he has evolved the so–called monogamous system? While the Prophet, as already pointed out, did not fail to show that monogamy is the best ideal to be followed in life, he was not, at the same time, holding fast and fanatically to the ideal, irrespective of the then surroundings and circumstances amidst which he had to live and struggle. He was really a great and true reformer and Prophet in as much as he could gauge clearly and correctly human nature in its multifarious forms, which had its inherent weakness, despite its boasted strength. Taking into consideration, this human weakness and also taking into consideration how the whole of Arabia was then steeped from top to bottom in stinking immorality, and viewing the problem of polygamy in its healthy and practical aspect, devoid of superstitious sentimentalities and one–sided idealistic theories, we

see in Mohammad a great personality with the instinct and insight of a true reformer. If polygamy, which, as pointed out, is truer to life, is followed properly and for proper reasons, it has got its own benefits. It has its sound social, ethical, economic, and national basis. That was the only effective and sensible way to check the then society in Arabia that had no idea of morality at all, where people even prided over their promiscuous and open immorality, where wine, women, wars and other vices were rampant and prominent. Frequent Islamic wars meant a decrease in the male population, and polygamous marriages, were the only means then to give the needed protection to those women who were left helpless behind.

About this, Khawja Kamal-Ud-Din in his book, "The Ideal Prophet," says thus: "Polygamy was observed indisimminately before Islam, as I said before, and there was no restriction as to the number of a man's wives. He could have as many as he wished. Islam regulated the number if special circumstances did unavoidably necessitate plurality of wives. There are certain contingencies in life where polygamy alone can check incontinence. The Muslim conception of evil is very vast. Islam regards it from various angles, and one of them is the hygienic angle. In connubial life, there arise occasions when man and woman should separate from each other for hygienic reasons. For instance, woman labours under certain disabilities, for a week, in every month. The days of pregnancy and the time of suckling of child are further disabilities that would last at least for eighteen

months. In the interest of the health of the child and of the mother, Islam strongly recommends that husband and wife should not share beds under these conditions. In this respect Mohammad advised us to exercise control over our passions and suggested various ways which might help us, of which fasting was one. But in no case, would he leave any loophole for misconduct. He would rather allow the husband to have the company of another wife than violate hygienic laws or pursue the course of incontinence; and if we observe these injunctions strictly, the number of wives will come to four." Let us quote a few lines from Mohammad Ali's book also. He says: "As a universal religion, Islam must needs provide for all sorts of abnormalities. Polygamy is one such provision, permissible only when certain abnormal conditions call for it. When such conditions do arise, polygamy becomes a necessity and if it is not allowed then, the result is immoral sexual intercourse. The society becomes corrupt. Unmarried mothers and natural children become a part of it. Polygamy is, under such circumstances, the only effective preventive. Call it a necessary evil, or what you will, it is the only safeguard against moral turpitude."

Thus, the Holy Prophet, Mohammad, brought about an entire change in the important social institution of marriage; he ennobled and elevated it from its merely mundane plane. He made it a means for the development of the noble side of man's life. It is imbued with the sacrificing spirit that one was made to live for those of his family, his wife and

children. It taught us to feel and do for others, what we feel and do for ourselves.

After all, what is the real nature of the so-called monogomy? We have already quoted what the German writer, Max Nordean says, about the polygamous instinct, in man, that is, in fact, the practical working of monogamy. The ideal is good; if followed, it is better. But it is not followed. And monogamy is not a Christian gift. For, polygamy was practised in Christendom itself some centuries ago. Not only this, every other religion and society allows it. Jesus Christ himself was silent on this subject, because he was not a law-giver, while he himself followed the Mosaic law, and insisted on its observance. All he tried to do was to check the excessive indulgence of his people in this respect. It was only the Roman Emperor, Justinian, who legislated about monogamy.

It is well and good to speak of the monogamy of the Christians. But let me ask, has it parged from its society polygamy? Marriage is, after all, a connection between man and woman, and therefore, a Christian in the West would appear to be a greater polygamist than others, for, he indulges in this unscrupulously. "But what an irony of fate! The former action, so healthy in its consequences, is branded as an offence which the law calls bigamy, while the latter, so flagrant and shameless in its methods, is practised with impunity, and the law takes no cognizance of it..... There are two evils which the world, from the beginning, has never been able to remedy,-the

uncontrolled brutality of man when under the excitement of his passions, and the weakness of a woman when she has become a victim thereto; and what is the result? Bastardy for the child, and misery and shame for the mother."

War babies, Houses of Rescue, foundling Homes etc., are the result of monogamy in Christendom. These innocent victims of human depravity whose whole life is an ignominy would have been saved, and assured a name and honour if polygamy was recognised among Christians. Polygamy is not a necessary condition of Muslim life, but is only adopted as a remedy for the evil that might follow from abuse, and it is allowed only under certain conditions which are well nigh difficult for the ordinary people to follow.

The following sayings of the Prophet will clearly show the high conception he had about the place of a wife in a family, and such sayings can never come out of the mouth of a licentious man. He says:

"The best of you are they who behave best to their wives."

"The best of you before GOD and His creation are those who are best in their own families, and I am the best to my family."

"Give her to eat when you eat yourself, and clothe her when you clothe yourself; and do not slap her on the face nor abuse her, nor separate yourself from her in displeasure."

"Give your wife good counsel, and do not beat your noble wife like a slave."

"Admonish your wives with kindness."

"A Muslim must not hate his wife; and if he be displeased with one bad quality in her, then let him be pleased with another which is good."

We have given in a separate tabular form an account of the Prophet's wives, and in the course of the narrative itself we have noted about the circumstances that brought about the various marriages. We have also noted at length about the supreme importance of Khadija's marriage, pointing out how that noble woman played no small part in the great mission of the Prophet. Like her, Ayesha also plays an important role in his life's work. Through her, much valuable information about him has been vouchsafed to the world. It is worth while, therefore, to deal about this marriage in detail.

Ayesha, the daughter of Abu Bakr, was very young at the time of her marriage. So, she remained at her father's house until eight months after the Emigration. "Ayesha was the beloved of Mohammad; she holds a very honoured position in the Muslim world on account of her service to Islam. After the death of the Holy Prophet she was always consulted by both high and low alike, on all matters of religion and domain. She is to this day called 'Umm-ul-Muslimeen' which means 'The Mother of all Muslims.' Mohammad often had revelations in her room, and it

was in her room that he breathed his last. She lived till about the last period of the fourth Caliphate. The marriage of Mohammad and Ayesha was a perfectly happy one, except for one incident that marred their happiness for a short time. We have already referred about this incident in the course of the narration, but a detail explanation may not be out of place here.

Once when the Holy Prophet, Mohammad, accompanied by his wife, Ayesha, was returning from an expedition, Ayesha went to answer the call of nature, and when she returned she discovered that she dropped her necklace; so she at once went back for it. Meanwhile, her attendants, thinking she had got into her ' howdah ', started off with it. Ayesha returned to find the men and camel gone; so she sat down and waited. Safwan who was coming in the rear picked her and the rest of the journey to Medina was accomplished in the company of Safwan. Some persons spread false rumours about her, saying she remained behind on purpose to meet Safwan and so on. Ayesha said, she was innocent, but Mohammad had an anxious time as he did not know whether to believe her or not. At length, her innocence was proved by the following revelation in the Quran. " Surely they who concocted the lie are a party from among you." (24 : 2) The Prophet had not the slightest doubt in his mind about her. The two chief ones to slander her were Abdullah bin Ubayy and the poet, Hassan; these two, together with the rest who took part in accusing her, were severely punished.

That the Prophet married Zainab, the divoced wife of his adopted son, ZAID, has also served as a fertile source for the critics' attack on him. Let us note again from Muir's book. He says: "A few months after his nuptials with Zainab and Omm Salma, the charms of a second Zainab were by accident discovered too fully before the Prophet's admiring gaze." She was the wife of Zaid, his adopted son and bosom friend; but he was unable to smother the flame she had kindled in his breast; and, by divine command, she was taken to his bed." See what a clean and open perversion of facts, and how sinister and cynical! Entirely different and highly dignified were the Prophet's motives in marrying Zainab, and the facts of the case are as follows: Zainab was the daughter of the Prophet's aunt. She was well-known to him from her very childhood. Zainab's brother was desirous that the Prophet himself should marry her. He could have very well agreed to the proposal then and there and married her. Nothing prevented him from doing so. In fact, her people were quite unwilling to give her in marriage to Zaid. They naturally preferred to have in marriage a kinsman of theirs to a liberated slave like Zaid. But the Prophet, being a great apostle and advocate of equlity and being desirous therefore to do away with all those false notions of birth, nobility and inferiority, wanted to set a practical example by seeing that Zaid himself married her. We know what a deep attachment he had for his slave. The marriage, of course, proved a failure since, it was a clear case of incompatability. The couple found it difficult to adjust matters. Zaid decided upon a divorce, and informed the Prophet about it. As stated in the Quran,

(33:36–37) the Prophet tried his level best to dissuade his adopted son from his intention; but it was of no avail. A divorce was, under the circumstances, inevitable. So, the Prophet himself had to maray her and shelter her in his household. "Refusal of her hand in the first case and acceptance in the second, conclusively shows that his motive in this marriage was anything but self-gratification. He would have very well accepted, before, the voluntary offer, instead of taking all the trouble to get her married to Zaid first, and then afterwards marry her as a divorced woman. So, his real motive in marrying her was to do away with the false notion that divorce degraded a woman in the eye of society. "Thus he elevated the whole class of divorced women who would otherwise suffer life long humiliation in society. It is absolutely false to allege that the Prophet took a fancy to Zainab and hence Zaid was made to divorce her. It is absurd on the very face of it. Is it conceivable that Zaid should thereafter have remained as devoted to him as ever?" Zaid would never have remained faithful and devoted to the Prophet or to Islam to the end of his days as he did. He was as attached to the Holy Prophet afterwards as he was before his divorce. So, it is clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Prophet married her later purely with a view to elevate divorced women, and partly because he felt it his duty to do so; he was mainly responsible in bringing Zaid and Zainab by the marriage to such an awkward state.

We have mentioned how the Prophet had to contract some marriages on political grounds. Juwariya was married that way. She belonged to the tribe of

the Banu Mustaliq, who were very much against the Muslims. And this marriage, as we know, did prove a great success, for it ended all enmity, converting the Banu Mustaliq into staunch friends of Islam. But the marriage of Mohammad with Safiyya, the daughter of a Jewish chief, which took place also for a political reason, was not a success at all. Although he married from one of their tribe with a view to bring out the bitterest enemies to his side, they remained ever hostile and the deadliest enemies of the Muslims. Coming to the marriage of the Prophet with Mary, the Coptic, who was only a slave girl, a foreigner, and a Christian by faith, we see how broad-minded and cosmopolitan the Prophet was, who wanted to show by this alliance how he respected other nationalities and religion, emphasising again the essential equality among mankind. By marrying the slave girl, he raised her to the status of a queen. Really universal was his religion. His life and career was thoroughly free from any tinge of narrow-mindedness. Thus there is visible behind all his matrimonial alliances a great purpose and a deep purport. Peace and blessings of Allah be ever on him!

Speak to men according to their mental capacities, for, if you speak all things to all men, some cannot understand you and so fall into errors.

—MOHAMMAD.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE LAST PROPHET.

SO, we have seen in the last chapter how the Holy Prophet, a great and true Prophet of humanity, showed himself as an ideal in domestic life, marrying many wives, and we have endeavoured our best to point out the various circumstances leading up to those matrimonial alliances and the deep purport and purpose behind them. Inscrutable and diverse are the ways of great souls, through whom God reveals Himself to mankind. Their actions, therefore, are not to be judged and gauged according to the laws and rules binding upon mankind in general. They are in the world, but not of it. Their thoughts and actions ever soar far, far higher, in their skylarkian sublimity and solemnity, pouring down on earth their melodious, and harmonious immortal thoughts and ideals. Prejudiced and warped judgments, unsympathetic one-sided criticisms and thoroughly illogical conclusions, are apt to mar and cloud the real greatness of such personalities, when such delicate questions as the Prophet's marriages should be handled and approached with much inward sympathy and understanding. We have seen that he was an ideal character, not only in the bosom of his family, but in every walk of life. There is something, in short, that distinctly distinguishes him from all the other prophets, making him undoubtedly the last, greatest Prophet. The like of him was not found before him

and after him. Nor is the world likely to produce a similar personality in future. He is an original without a copy.

Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, in his scholarly book, "The Ideal Prophet," gives the requisites of a true prophet, and every one of them are faithfully mirrored in the life of the Holy Prophet. He says: "The Idealization of a Prophet demands several things. First of all, we have to consider the nature of the task laid on his shoulders, and then his personality-for this goes a long way towards idealizing a person; then his character, which must possess an assemblage of all human vitues, so that he may act as a perfect pattern for others' imitation. He must disclose unique perseverance and pertinacity and presence of mind in face of the hardest ordeals and trials of life. The Ideal Prophet must be an ideal teacher of principles necessary for human advancement, an Ideal Expounder, on lines comprehensible by every shade of culture, and then he must be an ideal exemplar, who lives after his own teaching; for, example is better precept, and actions speak louder than sermons."

Let us consider the nature of the task imposed upon him. He was to be a Prophet of mankind. It was a heavy, crushing responsibility, no doubt. We have noted how he was all tremor and feverish when he received the first, Divine revelation, announcing that the mantle of prophethood was to descend upon him and how he was consoled by his wife, Khadija, who told him that Allah would never forsake him. It was but natural that the magnitude of the task unnerved

him for a time. But he never gave way, never despaired of success. From the very beginning, he was fully conscious of the great and onerous task that was before him, and was equally fully conscious, confident, and hopeful, that his well meant efforts would be ultimately crowned with undiluted success, and he did see with his own eyes, the supreme triumph of his cherished mission. That God would never allow him to die before the due fulfilment of such a task, and that He would, therefore, be always by his side, guiding and guarding him through all the perils and perplexities, was an unshakeable and undoubted conviction in him, the sole secret of his success. In other words, undying optimism which means faith–faith in himself and in the great cause that he was to represent and advocate, faith in that unknown guiding Hand, and even faith and hope in his bitterest enemies–cannot but be so adequately and handsomely rewarded. The great hero came out of the battles, spiritual, mental, and physical, with flying colours and with glory immortal. Read his memorable, farewell pilgrimage and his unique farewell address on that occasion that has rung through ages through million hearts. That is how he fulfilled faithfully the responsible task entrusted to him. The Quran says: "This day I have perfected for you your religion, and completed My favour on you." (5:3)

In fact, the Holy Prophet had to deliver to the world a message of a universal character, the upliftment of mankind as a whole; it was not like the task of Moses and Jesus, the redeeming of a particular tribe or nation like the Israelities, and even in this

narrow and limited mission, they had only a partial success. That these Prophets, even with an extremely narrow sphere of work, were not after all, able to achieve any appreciable success, only shows too clearly by sharp contrast, what a heavy responsibility underlay this universal message of the Prophet and what a towering personality of sterling qualities could alone score a victory of unprecedented character.

When we take into further consideration, the deplorable state of the world (it was, perhaps, the darkest age) at the advent of Mohammad, the Prophet, and how much he was able to contribute to the moral and spiritual upliftment and advancement of the world, we can more or less gauge the immensity of the task that lay before him, showing how he was really the last great Prophet. Born at such a time, and born amidst a people sunk in the lowest depth of degeneracy, himself illiterate, yet leading the purest and the most chaste life in that atmosphere of rank immorality, he contributed, not a little to the world's thought, spiritual, moral, and material. And this again proves beyond doubt, how he was truly a divinely-appointed Prophet.

The Quran refers to the corrupt state of the world then in the following words. "Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought." (XXX:41) "But Arabia was the darkest spot in the darkest age of the world's history. Drink, adultery and gambling were common. Murder, infanticide and robbery were the pride of the Arabs.

There was no moral, religious or social restrictions, no limits to marriage, no restraints on divorce.'..... Human sacrifice was prevalent, and the daughters were buried alive at birth. Bloody quarrels and suicides were frequent. The spirit of rapine, murder and revenge had reached such a pitch that women did not feel content until they had dyed their garments with the blood of their enemy, and eaten his very heart.....If the world ever needed, a Prophet, it was at that time.....That was a period when the whole horizon of the world had become darkened under the clouds of infidelity, ignorance and wantonness. Virtue had finished, and evil stood for righteousness."

There is a world of difference in every respect between the advent of Moses and Jesus and that of the Holy Prophet, for, the former were placed under comparatively favourable circumstances, and we have already pointed out the limited nature of their message. On the other hand, to read carefully the chequered career of the Prophet of Arabia, is to understand how he had to contend against all sorts of forces, internal and external, amidst a barren and barbarous atmosphere all round. It was just like extracting fresh water out of the mere barren soil of Arabia, of hard rock and burning sand, truly symbolical of the nature of the inhabitants there. It was trying the impossible. Placed under such circumstances, Moses and Jesus, would have miserably failed. So, here is the true, great hero and Prophet, who wonderfully and completely achieved what no other person could not have achieved. Says Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din: "Moses was brought up in the house of wealth and culture.

Jesus arose under a notion that could boast of the highest form of civilisation; but Mohammad was raised 'to recite communications of Allah' to those who had not emerged even from the twilight of an early civilisation, and were wrapped up in the shrouds of ignorance. He came to 'purify' a nation steeped in barbarism, superstitions, cruelty, and vice; he was inspried 'to teach the Book and the Wisdom' to a people shrouded in absolute spiritual darkness and sunk in complete mental and moral torpor.' From such a state of affairs, what a magical and marvellous metamorphosis he wrought: Islamic culture and civilisation that spread from Granada to Delhi infused an altogether a new vitality and virility, especially in the West, awakening nations from slumber, sloth and lethargy. "Mohammad established the unity of GOD in its purest form and placed it on an unshakeable foundation. If religion is sent to tell something of God, and to acquaint humanity with its creator and His attributes, can history point to any person other than Mohammad who has served the cause of religion better."

Unlike the lives of other Prophets which are shrouded in mystery and mysticism, with additions, alterations, and commentaries, largely discounting the veracity and accuracy of historicity, Mohammad is a truly historic figure, even the minutest details about his life being available. He stands before us in bold, outstanding relief, and there is no discrepancy between his life and what is said in the Quran. In fact, his exemplary life is the best commentary on the Quran. There are neither additions nor alterations in it as we find in the Bible, and it is

thoroughly rational and consistent throughout. There can be no two opinions, therefore, as to the superiority of his life and teachings over the lives and teachings of other Prophets. "The record of his words and deeds is complete, and his precepts and examples stand in complementary relation to each other, as if every need of the human soul has been anticipated and every cotingency of human existance provided for in the mirror of his life.....The Ideals of Jesus tend, rather more than less, to influence the individual towards the life of a recluse. They do not fit in with social or national life. They have no bearing on international relations. There is, moreover, a sort of discrepancy between the various utterances of Jesus and his recorded actions which do not help us in understanding his precepts. They in a way are contrary to his own teachings. The root of all is that his disciples or other contemporaries did not leave us an adequate record of his life. Such has been the case with the other Prophets of God. 'Unlike all other Prophets, whose proper likeness is concealed from us in a mist of reverence, Mohammad is a clear historic character, the numberless details of whose conduct and demeanour are recorded for us by his own contemporaries.' Mohammad is the only Prophet who may be called historic in the true sense of the word. From his childhood to his death, most of his life–and especially the period of his ministry as a Prophet is on record."

There is not that something wanting, something missing in his life and teachings, but everything is complete, perfect, and exemplary. He did not die

before fulfilling his life's mission; he did not do anything half-hearted, nor leave anything half-done. "This day I have perfected for you your religion, and completed My favour on you." We have mentioned how his life and conduct was a faithful reflection of his teachings in the Quran. Moreover, he experienced in his own life the various phases of human activity, rising to the highest position in life from the lowest rung of the ladder. "A king, a statesman, a warrior, a general, a law giver, a judge, a conqueror, a persecuted fugitive, a tradesman, a friend, a son, a father, a husband, a neighbour-all these characters are mirrored in most beautiful colours in his life. It is not through his sermons and teachings that we have to make our estimate of his character or teaching, but through his actions and deeds. In this respect, Mohammad is the only solitary noble example in history. How can any other personality be taken as an ideal and a universal model for the human race if his own life has not been of a universal character? Jesus is no example to others in various walks of life, leave apart his being ideal, and he is not decidedly so in its higher avenues." There are persons who may be perfect and ideal in particular walks of life, and they will invariably be found disproportionately imperfect in other walks of life, even completely ignorant of certain affairs in life. Nor do all obtain chances to go through the various walks of life, and even if they do get, they may not rise up to the occasion and prove themselves equal to it. But in Mohammad we find all circumstances combining together to make him a model in any way walk of life. Indeed, Idealisation reached its highest, all-round

perfection in him. Is he not verily the greatest Prophet? And consequently each trait in his character is exhibited in its sublimest form, ever tried, but never found wanting, shining all the more resplendent through those divers ordeals. It is worth while examining in detail these striking traits in him.

The Holy Quran speaks in its early revelations about the perfect morals of the Prophet; for instance, read this: "Most surely you conform (yourself) to sublime morality." God also says, "So he attained completion, as he is in the highest point of the Horizan." The Hadith says: "I was made Prophet to perfect the highest morals." Two things were needed to perfect the morals, and the Quran says, the Holy Prophet possessed them. The following will make the statement plainer. It is easy for a man to be lonely and humble when he is poor; but this quality can only be said to be perfect when he continues to remain humble after he has attained power and greatness. "It is hard to give up a kingly throne and lead the life of a hermit, but it is far harder that one should wield the royal sceptre, yet at the same time lead a hermit's life, that one should possess power and pelf, yet spend it solely to promote the welfare of others, that one should ever have the most alluring attractions before one's eyes, yet never for one moment be captivated by them." A person who is poor can also be charitable, but only in his thoughts and intentions, because he has not got the money, to give in charity. But to remain charitable after becoming wealthy, by spending freely in charities, to starve oneself deliberately amidst plenty, guided by the

highest spirit of self–denial and selflessness, to attain that enviable perfection in mental culture; it is sacrificing everything for the greatest welfare of humanity; it is charitableness in its noblest and most perfect form. The same can be said of foregiveness. A man has not got the strength or means to punish one who harms him; he is compelled by necessity to overlook the offence and forgive the offender. But this sort of forgiveness cannot be viewed as being complete or perfect, in as much as it is partial and feeble. But if one is powerful and able to deal well with his offenders, yet freely forgives them, though they might have done their utmost to harm and hurt him, that is forgiveness in its perfect type. Weakness of any kind is a defect. A gentle disposition must be combined with a resolute will. Only a man of real strength and courage knows that the value of not using his power to achieve a better purpose. Mere softness of heart goes to the wall, since it lacks the proper sap and support. The Prophet's character is cleanly devoid of any trace or tinge of weakness, physical, mental or moral. Therein lies the supreme excellence, with all the essentials of perfections.

The height of perfection in the Holy Prophet is such an accepted fact that even an enemy cannot deny or refute the same. The presence of all the morals means that such a person must have passed through all conditions and stages in life; and not even a hard critic can deny that Mohammad did not pass through all those different phases of life. He was the only Prophet who followed all the principles he preached to others. He is the one and only true

example to this golden rule: all he taught to the world he practised himself. "We may read to others homilies of forgiveness and sermons of meakness, but lip-teaching in itself furnishes no proof that we possess the morals we teach to others. Words converted into actions alone can show that we possess moral virtues." The Holy Prophet did convert every one of the words he uttered into actions. He taught the world patience and forbearance, because he himself faced the hardest trials in life. A posthumous child and an orphan from his early childhood, he was spotlessly pure and innocent from the very beginning. In his youth, surrounded as he was by vices and evils, he kept himself clean and undefiled from all the desires of the flesh. From his birth to death, he passed through many difficult and trying stages; at every stage he was tried, but was never found wanting. When he proclaimed his Prophethood, it was a very hard time for him. The whole nation turned against him; he was absolutely alone and helpless. The completeness and perfection of helplessness is seen in the event of 'Hijrat' (Migration), when but with a single friend, he had to hide in a cave for safety. Then came the tedious days of wars. His life was ever in peril. But in the end, success was his. In Medina he was king, judge, magistrate, general peacemaker, and law-giver; in all these he was perfect.

He did not know what it was to be avaricious. Even his enemies must admit that he had no desire for wealth and for worldly possessions. Such things had no value for him. Did not the Quraish once offer him all the wealh in the land? But he refused even

to consider the offer. And when he became king and the rightful and undisputed owner to the whole wealth of the land, he did not care to have it, and continued to live the same life of poverty and want. There are many instances of men who have given up kingdoms to live a life of poverty in solitude, but the Holy Prophet expressed this quality to supreme perfection by living a life of poverty amidst the riches and luxuries of kingship.

That he was thus in the world, but not of it, like the lotus on water, that with his feet on earth, but with his heart and soul ever soaring to the highest regions, the Prophet so beautifully and perfectly combined in him the best ideals of a Prophet and saint, living as he did amidst a world of distractions and sordid desires. Like the true hermits of old he lived spotless throughout, carried self-control and self-abnegation to the highest point, spent much of his time in solemn meditations and prayers, often resorting to lonely places and caves for the same; but he realised all these things in a world of action, and himself was also a great apostle of action. He saw everywhere the beauty and utility of God's marvellous creations, the storehouse of endless knowledge and wisdom, thus rightly interpreting the ideal and divine aspect of this universe, while on the other hand, the hermits of old, of the orthodox type, who spent their whole lifetime, far, "far from the madding crowd," in forest caves, "chanting hymns and counting beads," could only view this beautiful universe of God in a futile and negative light, because their existence itself was negative and futile in a way, declaring every thing as evanescent

and sinful. That hermit is the only true and perfect hermit who is able to realise the highest ideals in life in the world of action and incessant creations, rendering the maximum benefit to mankind. Only this way one can obtain that complete and comprehensive knowledge of the world, of men and affairs, and this is the attainment of true perfection. The other is only a one-sided existence, a sort of spiritual selfishness and otiosity, howsoever, inasmuch as it lacks a lot by not being in contact with the world of reality. See how the Holy Prophet, Mohammad, combined in him in a harmonious and handsome manner everything that was good in work and worship ! He thus realised the ideal by idealising the real. Was he not ever in close communion with God, the Almighty and the All-knowing, and was he not the only Prophet who successfully instituted the worship of the One and the only God among mankind? Is not that the greatest service and the greatest ideal? And look at his unflincing faith in Allah even at the most miserable moments! And he never swerved from the path of righteousness and truth, and always kept up to the high ideals of his mission, though he was tried not a little by irresistible temptations and hardest ordeals. We know what answer he gave to his wives when they approached him with the request to afford them better comforts in life. Does this not show how he viewed life in all its solemnity and seriousness, ever thinking of the life hereafter, of the life of immortal bliss, and not of the temporary pleasures and luxuries of life? He was, in short, an ideal Prophet in the most comprehensive sense.

Let us continue to examine in detail some other traits in him, found in their perfection; for instance, the quality of forgiveness. To regard all alike, hating none and loving even the bitterest enemies, to be free from malice and the spirit of revenge, is to exhibit that rare nobility and divinity in man. In this also, the Prophet was admirably exemplary. We know what untold sufferings he underwent at the hands of his own people in Mecca and how he was consequently forced to leave the land of his birth, himself and his religion seeking refuge in Medina, and even in Medina his enemies allowed him no peace or rest with their incessant persecutions and wars. But what did he do in return when the whole of Mecca lay helpless before him? He only said: "There shall be no reproof against you this day." What, not a single soul punished! Even those enemies were taken aback by this unparalleled exhibition of mercy and forgiveness. Thus he conquered their hearts. The conquest of Mecca was a double or even a treble conquest–not only physical, but moral and spiritual too. Is this not love in its highest form, and do not mercy and forgiveness reach here their transcendental heights? The Prophet exhibited the same flawfless spirit of forgiveness towards the people of Taif who insulted and wounded him beyond limit. Many tried to kill him and harm him the most. But he was ever the same angel of mercy and forgiveness.

Prosperity is apt to upset the head and heart of any; but the greatness of a man is all the more enhanced and that man is truly great, who is able to combine in him greatness with humility. The great

and Holy Prophet was such. When we think of the great, little men, full of pride and arrogance, what a rare model do we see in him! In the height of his kingly power and glory, when he could have very well commanded any amount of comfort and luxury, he was leading the same humble, simple, and unassuming life, himself mending his clothes and shoes, and even assisting his wives in their divers domestic duties. No work was too low for him. Did he not work along with others in the construction of the first mosque in Medina, carrying baskets of sands and stones like an ordinary cooly, and did he not in the same way work in the trenches, covered all over with dirt and dust? He had none of that pomp and glory about him. He used to say, "I am only a man like unto you." Thus he identified himself with the humblest of persons, showing in his own life the true meaning of equality and brotherhood. He also used to say, "I am nothing more than a servant of God and His Apostle. He never claimed any divinity. In him self-effacement reached its true perfection.

Look how we may, it is very difficult to find another example of such a harmonious and beautiful assemblge of all virtues—greatness and meakness, gentleness and firmness, might and mercy, courage and kindness; loving the good things of the world, finding beauty and divinity in everything, but yet not of it; a staunch advocate of actions and deeds, but ever keeping up the highest ideals in life, and living in constant communion with God; a great and true soldier of Allah and a greater and truer lover of peace; tolerant and forgiving, but never compromising with

ideals and principles; charitable and hospitable, but disliking beggary. See how the seemingly contrary virtues and qualities meet and attract each other in this great perfect model of a tremendous potentiality, free from any defect of weakness! "Every Prophet of God was an Ideal, and came as a model, to be imitated by the people he was raised up among, and he would be the same ideal to all coming generations, if we were in possession of his full record and if he had the necessary opportunities for the display of various virtues which he had undoubtedly possessed, but was unable to put into practice for want of an opportunity. But as things stand, we look only to Mohammad as such a Prophet. In him we find every requisite of a Prophet. He assembled in him all that was individually possed by the other Prophets. He collects in him all that we want to see in a Prophet."

Is he not thus a towering personality who was able to inspire in his followers, love, devotion and reverence, of a rare type? Is it any wonder then, that he was able to march from success to success, disarming all hatred and obstacles? He was born to win; failure and impossibility were unknown to him. What cannot such a personality do? "It conciliates oppositions and inspires respect and imitation, which result, in the long run, in implicit obedience. It inspires others with its own spirit and dyes them in its own colour. It changes ideas and revolutionizes the thoughts, the habits and the customs of its contemporaries. It creates a new basis for the beliefs and actions of generation after generation of the races of mankind. In a word, it creates a new heaven and a new earth.....In

Mohammad we have this ideal personality, who in his own lifetime moulds the character of his fellow-men, reforms them, changes their thoughts, puts new ideals before them, elevates them to a higher plane, and in spite of themselves, drives them onwards and upwards on the path of progress, to the fullness of a better and holier life." The Prophet wrought this wonderful metamorphosis within an incredibly short period of a score of years, and that too among a people full of ignorance, superstition and vice, and as such a reformation among them would have meant an uphill work for centuries. The following is what the Encyclopaedia Britanica says, a testimony of no small value and importance. "Of all the religious personalities of the world, Mohammad was the most successful." He was not what some adverse critics paint him to be. S. Khuda Bakhsh rightly answers them thus: Mohammad is now no longer an impostor, but a great reformer. He is no longer a nurotic patient suffering from epilepsy, but a man of tremendous character and unbending will. He is no longer a self-seeking despot ministering to his own selfish ends, but a beneficient ruler, shedding light and love around him. He is no longer an opportunist, but a prophet with a fixed purpose, undeviating in his constancy. All this, Europe has now acknowledged, and acknowledged freely."

And we see how this great Prophet was able to evolve himself to such sublime heights of virtues, born as he was under the most inattractive and chilling circumstances and surroundings. He was an orphan, he was illiterate, but he left the world as a great

Prophet. God would have as well sent for the reformation of mankind a model angel with perfect qualities. The Quran refers about this: "Had there been in the earth; angels walking alone as settlers; We would certainly have sent down to them from the heaven an angel as an apostle." Even such an angel cannot be, after all, the best ideal for man; man alone, experiencing the various walks of life, being a model guide in each, can be the guiding star, and we have seen the many-sided activities and qualities of this highly evolved soul, an immortal hero for ages. "The ideal is to be attained by selecting and assembling in one whole the beauties and perfections which are usually seen in different individuals excluding everything defective or unseemly, so as to form a type or model of the species." So was an ordinary man like Mohammad, perfect and pure beyond doubt, selected as the Prophet for mankind, the last, great Prophet. "He stands ahead, centuries before. He is the Prophet of all time, and of people of all shades of culture and enlightenment. To-day the world is coming to adopt the truths he preached in his own time."

"There is one thing in him that shows that he had achieved that Zenith of character and morality that must be the final goal of human endeavour, where man reflects Divine morals. Like all the ways and laws of God, Mohammad is unchangeable. In victory or in defeat, in power or in adversity, in affluence or in indigence, he is the same man." That man is really great, and he reaches God-like quality and divinity, who is calm and quiet under all circumstances. This is

the sublime and subtlest aspect of a highly optimistic life. It is said, that the clothes in which this noble soul breathed his last had patches. The Prophet himself is reported to have once said thus: "We of the class of Prophets neither inherit from others nor do we have anything for others to inherit from us." His life was, in short, a series of sacrifices, sufferings and trials, patiently and gladly borne, in the cause of Allah and for the sake of humanity. His life and work is an immortal monument. "If Moses, Jesus and many other prophets of the world can rightly be accepted as messengers from God by their respective followers, Mohammad undoubtedly has got a prior and better claim to universal allegiance as a true messenger from Allah."

Jabir son of Abdullah narrates that the Holy Prophet peace and blessings of Allah be on him said: "O Jabir, dost thou know that Allah raised thy father to life and said to him: 'O Abdullah, ask what thou likest best'. He answered 'My Lord send me back to the world that I may become martyr again in Thy way'. Allah said: 'It is My unalterable decree that the dead shall not be sent a second time to the world". (This tradition has been mentioned by Ahmed Bin Humbal, 2. Abdullah Bin Hamid, 3. Abu Yala, 4. Shasi, 5. Tibrani, 6. Hakim, 7. Abu Naim, 8. Zarqani, 9. Tirmazi.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE END OF PROPHETHOOD.

IT is quite plain and clear from the last chapter that with Mohammad as the last, great Prophet, there is an end in the advent of Prophets. Since there was no necessity for the further rise of prophets. Through the perfect man, Mohammad, God perfected his religion as seen in His Holy Book, the Quran. We shall see in detail in this chapter, and it is worth while doing so, how the Holy Prophet and his book, the Quran, reach a finality in prophethood and religion.

When God creates human beings for some special purpose, then it is just natural that he should give instructions to these human beings to achieve the purpose of their creation. It was for this, that he sent among all nations, from time to time, Prophets to reveal to them his wishes, and to instruct them, so that they could be guided through the right path that leads to the fulfilment of the true purpose of creation. Because the God of all mankind is One, therefore the injuctions revealed to different nations, through various Prophets, were identical, except that they varied in details, according to national and geographical conditions, but otherwise, the fundamentals of all were the same.

In the early days of our forefathers, the life of man was simple and plain, entirely free from the

present day complications of society and state. In consequence, the intelligence of man then, as measured by man's progress and evolution in the world, was not so fully developed as to understand and fathom the mysteries of religion; the instructions then revealed were, therefore, simple. As such the early revelations were only to prove in simple language that God of all creations is One, that human beings and other things created are his creations alone; that there is a form for praying to God; and that there is a life after death, where every one's deeds will be judged. "And what they had done they shall find present (there); and your Lord does not deal unjustly with anyone." (The Holy Koran: 18:49) "On the day that every soul shall find what it has done of good and what it has done of evil." (3: 29) As humanity advanced in evolutionary progress, and as the complications of life increased greater and greater, so naturally and proportionately the laws of religion became more and more widened in their scope. In accordance with these changing conditions in life and religion, it was found necessary that, from time to time, Prophets should be raised, who added to, and improved on, the old instructions as God deemed necessary.

In early days, the nations of the world lived in complete seclution and isolation from each other, because of the lack, or rather the absence of the means of communication and transportation. As such, they were self-centred and self-sufficient units in the then social organisation, economically and spiritually as well. Hence, each nation had its own Prophets and

sacred books. A Prophet of one nation had, under the circumstances, no intercourse with the Prophet of another nation. The result of this was, that each nation regarded itself as the chosen nation or tribe of God, and that His blessings were privileged to be theirs alone. Later, when means of transport had brought them closer to one another, this natrually led one nation to regard all others as the despised ones of God, each of them thinking itself to be the chosen one. Thus, the gulf between nations went on widening, and peace and tanquillity became impossible. It was necessary, therefore, to find out some remedy and solution to bring all nations together in harmonious terms with one another.

When God thought that the time had come for all nations to amalgamate into one big unit and organisation, under one religion, so that all differences and disputes between nations may be put to an end, uniting one and all together into one fraternity under the common bond of religion. This also would strike an effective blow at the racial, national, and other barriers, all united peacefully with the worship of the One God. To reveal this universal religion to the whole of mankind, God selected Mohammad from Arabia as his Prophet. This was in accordance with scriptural prophecy in which GOD revealed and promised to Abraham that He would raise from his sons Prophets in future. Before, Prophethood was confined to the issues of Abraham through Isaac, and now it was transferred to the descendants of Abraham from Ishmail. Arabia, the country selected by God, to raise his last Prophet, was of all countries, most

plunged in idolatry and sin, as we have already seen, where up to that time no Prophet had been raised, and where in the words of Sir William Muir, even preachings of the Jewish faith and later on Christianity, failed to have the slighest effect.

As to the Jewish faith and Christianity, they themselves had strayed away from the techings of their Prophets. Christianity had itself established idolatry, by making images of Jesus Christ and his mother, and worshipping them as divinities. About the Jewish faith, history gives ample evidence of the manipulation of the 'Torah', (the old Testament) by human hands. The Jewish priests had supreme authority; they interfered with religion and the religious books, and introduced changes and additions in them accordingly, to meet their own ends. These were the religions that had not been very long in the world, but had already come to such a pass as to be under the absolute and unquestioned authority of the clergy. They are to this day, religions of the clergy, and not the religion of God. Now for instance, in the Christian form of worship, it is seen, that the Mass in the Catholic Churches, and services in others, are for the worship of Jesus Christ alone. But the God of all, and according to the Christian beliefs, The Father, who should be considered greater than the son, is forgotten; very few prayers are said in praise of Him. This is the state of these revealed religions to-day, and this was their state then, as the history of the deeds of the Church and the Clergy show.

Under these circumstances, an illiterate man arose from Arabia, and was made the Prophet to redeem

the world. We have already pointed out how he was born in a country where corruption and vice had reached their lowest stage. Born as he was, to redeem mankind and to bring to them the purest form of God's religion, Mohammad from his early days began to ponder over the pathetic state of affairs, anxious to find out a solution to end all these wickedness and vices; for otherwise he felt sure, some dreadful calamity would befall and destroy the whole people. So, God chose Mohammad, the Perfect Man, and made him the last Prophet, revealing to him Islam, the True religion, to preach to the rest of mankind, and thus redeem the whole world.

As previous chapters show, the Holy Prophet, Mohammad, on being raised to Prophethood, brought about an entire change among all. Things unclean, and ungodly, he made clean and godly; Besides this, he pointed out to the followers of other books, the grave errors into which they had fallen, inviting them to the right path to God. It was a transformation, acknowledged by the whole world, from bad to good, from ugly and uncouth to beautiful, from dirty and unclean to pure, from base and degraded to sublime. It was a light from Heaven that infused his being and illuminated all. It will take volumes to write about the good instructions Islam preached and the reformation it brought. Islam chose for its inception a place that had no gospel before, so that the super-structure of the religion should be raised and built on world basis. The time had come for the foundation of a world religion; so, an appropriate place was chosen from where it could be laid without delay and without conflicts.

The true purpose of religion is that human beings should follow the right path according to Divine teachings. But before asking people to follow teachings, it is first necessary to explain to them in full and in a convincing manner about the teachings and whose teachings they are ; secondly, about the one who is preaching them, and finally, the great benefit that will be derived by following them. These are the fundamentals on which religions are formed. To have a comparative study of Islam in the light of the teachings found in other sacred books, is to know what a comprehensive, world-religion Islam is, pointing out also how the author of such a religion was decidedly the last, great Prophet, there being consequently no further necessity at all for another Paophet to rise. Quran is the final revealed Book of God, and Mohammad is the last Prophet.

Among all the revealed religions, only the Old Testament shows that a part of it is really a revelation, and as for other books, previous to the Old Testament, it is not even known what there names were, or in what language they were written, or what has become of them. About the Bible, (The New Testament) the European Christians themselves have proved by scholarly research that, except for a few sentences which are revelations, the rest of the book is a biography, and that too, neither authoritative nor authentic and accurate. The study of the Old Testament, the Jewish Book, shows three things : (1) God is one (2) none can be associated with Him, (3) that He is the God of Israelites alone, which means clearly that He is a local God. The story in

the Testament, that Jacob wrestled one night with God, has given the conception that He has a body. It is quite probable that the Christian conception of the Divinity, that Christ is the son of God, may be due to the metaphors of the Old Testament.

For the true significance of the conception of God in Islam, the study of the Holy Quran will prove the best guide, which will show what an exalted position God holds, the One and the Universal God of all. The Catholic Bishop, Lefroy, speaking of the Muslim conception of God says, " Not so much that God is One, as that God is—that His Existence is the ultimate fact of the universe—His will is supreme—His sovereignty absolute—His power limitless," (Mankind and Church P. 283). The attributes of God in Islam are to be seen in the everyday existence of all life, and the mere understanding of it fills one's heart with reverence and adoration.

The theory of the Unity of God, is not only that no one else should be associated with Him, but that, in the obedience of His orders, no one should be given preference. If it happens to be another being, or even just a wish of the heart, if it interferes or interrupts in any way with the communion of the soul with God, it should be got rid of unhesitatingly. This is to be found in no other religious book except the Holy Quran.

Islam, by repudiating the conception of a local God, preached that the One God is the God of the whole world; this is the foundation stone of the world

religion. On the subject of other Prophets and their books, mostly all religious books are silent. In the Bible itself, the Son of God has declared all previous Prophets, thieves and robbers; and all that the Old Testament shows is that the nation to which it belongs is the only one loved by God. None of these books explain or point out the standards by which the Prophets can be judged or believed. It is the Holy Quran alone which has thrown light and guidance on this subject. The Quran was revealed in Arabia; nothing was added to or substracted from it. The Holy Prophet, Mohammad, came to redeem the whole world, because his God is the God of the world. He himself gave proof of his prophethood, and did not depend on others to do so. He set forth a standard for the recognition of other Prophets, and one of the first things he proclaimed was that there were many Prophets raised before him from among many nations, and that all former Prophets were equally the beloved of God. By the constant changes made in the Old Testament, the characters of former Prophets were besmirched. The Holy Prophet of Islam cleared their names and all those false charges against them, strongly testifying to their infallibilities. The second foundation stone of the world religion was that the Holy Prophet preached the brotherhood of man-kind, and invited all, not only those of his own nation, to join in the world fraternity under The One True GOD.

Another important subject, about which all other religious books except the Holy Quran are silent, is the proper enunciation of the subject of life after death. That there is an everlasting life after death,

where all deeds will be judged and weighed, is all the explanation they give on the point. The Holy Quran on the other hand, deals in full about this important and mysterious subject. In the first place, it divides the life after death into two sections: one from the time of death to the day of judgement, and the other from the day of judgement to infinity. The second place, it describes the deeds and their philosophy, and then explains the real conception of Heaven and Hell.

What and who are the angels? What relations have they with God and human beings? These questions are not solved by any other religious book except the Holy Quran, which explains at length all about angels, their position, station, and relation with God and humanity.

Why was the world created? What must be the purpose of God in creating human beings? To what length can human beings be tied by the hands of fate? To what extent can human beings utilise nature in their development? These are the issues that arise from the question of fate, and again, no other book except the Quran explains these.

The tenets of Islam are two; first, duty to God, and second to fellow-beings. The philosophy of 'IBADAT', duty to God, is expressed in two words, " La Allakum Tat Taqoon," which means, become Godly by establishing communion with God. The Islamic prayer is not a ritual, but a simple means of expressing homage and devotion to God. During prayer time,

the Islamic brotherhood is well seen, when all, irrespective of colour, race and position, stand side by side and offer their prayers to God. To pray, without knowing the significance of prayer, is futile; Islam teaches the value of prayer by explaining about it in detail. In Islam there is no intermediary between man and God.

About the duties of human beings to fellow-beings, the preachings of Islam surpass those of all other religions. In political thought, Islam made the theory of democracy possible, through its social and political code, pointing out the interdependence of the one on the other. The civil and criminal fundamentals for the purpose of building the codes are on the world basis. It modified the laws of the previous religions to embrace within it world conditions. The basic and underlying fact of all legislations is justice, punishment, when it is not detrimental to the offender, being modified according to the need, so as to make him again a useful member of society.

It is thus clear from the foregoing paras that Islam is the final religion of the world. This being the case, every fact that proves it, also goes to prove that the Holy Prophet was the last of the line of Prophets. This fact is not only borne out by the Muslim literature, Quran, and by the world event but also by Christian and Hebrew Scriptures.

Now I give below extracts from the Traditions themselves to show that the Holy Prophet was the last, and that no other Prophet was raised after him.

Abu Huraira quotes the saying of the Prophet: "The Israelite Prophets attended to the affairs of Israel, and when a Prophet used to die, the other used to be raised to take his place. After me there will be raised no Prophet to succeed, but instead there will be my vicegerants." Tirmizi writes that the Prophet said, "On me the Prophethood has ended, and there will be raised, no Prophet after me." Another saying of the Prophet among other things, as quoted by Suban in Tirmizi states:....."There will be some among my followers who will claim to be Prophets, but the fact is that I am the last Prophet and there shall be no Prophet raised in the world after me." Burkhari and Muslim have a saying as reported from Jasir bin Moazam which is thus: "I have got many names; I am Mohammad; I am Ahmed; I am Mahi; I am Hashir—and I am Aqib; The Aqib after which there will be no Prophet."

All the sayings quoted, and many scare more, will all prove that the Prophet Mohammad was the last Prophet and that there would be no other one raised after him. I have shown somewhere how gradually, by means of an evolution, that the religion of God was completed. The fact shows that God did not only send the Prophets to bring back mankind, each time it strayed away from the right path, but also to give a further chapter to the evolution of religion which he intended to complete one day. It is accepted among all schools of Muslim Thought. Islam is the religion, or the name given by Allah to his completed religion. Therefore, the mere fact that religion is completed shows that there will be no other

Prophet, for, there will not be any need of a Prophet. This brings us to another aspect, that despite all these steps taken by the Divine Being to recall or inform those who go astray after this completion of religion with its code of laws there has always been and will always be defaulters. Religion is only to show human beings a path which they should follow if they wish to attain all that a human being is capable of in this and the other world. Therefore, some who assert that there is a need of a somebody, from time to time, to come and call back the strayed ones, is not true. To call back was not the primary object of the Prophets; then the present Islam would have been quite a different thing. The very fact that each Prophet added to the existing code of religious laws amply proves that they were not sent to call back, but to march forward.

So far the strayed away or the defaulters are concerned, there is absolutely no need of callers back; for them there is the reward for their actions, either in this world, if the Government is Islamic, or in the next world before the seat of Allah. The theory of a "Mujaddid" appearing every century, as propounded by a school of thought in Northern India, is only an outcome of zealous and servile brains, for, it does not hold good before facts. There is no need of a "Mujaddid" whatsoever in religion. We may want men who can be an authority on the exposition of Quran and Sunna; first, there is a need of this class of men, but there is not the need of a "Mujaddid". The religion of Allah does not need that.

God has completed His religion. It is in Quran and "Fiqh". We are shown the path to follow; a path that will please God, our neighbours and ourselves, and which will bring about the comtemplated and desired end. That we do not follow it, and sometimes, stray away from it, does not justify the need of a "Mujaddid". It only means that we have defaulted, and that therefore, we will be meted out the punishment for it either in this world or in the next. Religion is there, as it was, without change or interpolation as completed by God through the Holy Prophet, Mohammad. If there had been any interpolations in it, if there had been tapping with its tenets to suit selfish purposes, than there could have been the need of a "Mujaddid", but when there is no such thing, there is surely no need of such a person; and that to call that person a Prophet is, in my humble opinion, not only wrong, but highly objectionable. It is clear from Quran and Sunna that the Holy Prophet was the last Prophet, and after that for the Muslims to entertain, much less to believe, that there can be any other Praphet, surely amounts to one of the severest and gravest breaches of faith. Therefore, to try to prove from Quran and Sunna that anybody can be a Prophet is to commit a great sin withal. There will come only one Prophet, but it should be remembered here, not that he will not be a Prophet, but an old one. There will be a second *advent* of Christ, and as he was, and is a Prophet. Therefore, he will not be a new Prophet; therefore, the assertion of the Holy Prophet, Mohammad, to be the last Prophet, is quite true. When the second advent of Christ will be, and where he would first appear, are questions clothed in

mysteries, but that it will not be now, or in the Qadiyan, is abundantly clear. The Christ that will come again will descend from Heaven and not come out of the womb of mother again. He is referred to as "Ibn Maryam", that is, the "son of Mary." And as it is not possible for Mary to be born again, nor is it possible for that time when Christ was born to come back again, therefore Islam said that he would descend from Heaven. In the face of these facts, to set up a man as the Christ resuscitated, is nothing but the fulfilment of the prophecy of the Holy Prophet who said that "there will be some thirty of my followers who will claim that they are Prophets....."

The laws of Islam are the same, the Quran is, as it was revealed, and this being so, there appears no need for a Prophet to be raised, and certainly no Prophet will be raised. To juggle with the meaning of the Quran and Sunna, to bring out a meaning to suit the self, is not Islamic. But as God has Himself promised to protect the Holy Book, we hope and we are sure that Islam would remain pure as ever. May the Great Book and its Greater Author guide us to light and life through all the darkness of the world!

END.

"Doing Justice between two people is charity; and assisting a man upon his beast, and lifting his baggage is charity; and pure words in which be rewards; and answering a questioner with mildness is charity; and removing that which is an inconvenience to man, such as thorns and stones, is charity.

"There is no Muslim who planteth a tree or soweth field, and man, birds or beasts eat from them, but it is charity for him.

"Verily are there rewards for our doing good to quadrupeds and giving them water to drink?" He said, 'There are rewards for benefiting every animal having a moist liver,' (i. e. every one alive).

"Every good act is charity and verily it is the number of good acts to meet with your brother with an open countenance. and to pour water from your own bag into his vessel.

"Your smiling in your brother's face is charity; and your exhorting mankind to virtuous deeds is charity; and your prohibiting the forbidden is charity; and your shewing men the road in the land in which they lose it, is charity for you; and your assisting the blind is charity for you.

"Whoever bringeth the dead land to life; that is, cultivateth waste land, for him is reward therein.

Whoso desireth that Allah should redeem him from the sorrows and travail of last day, must delay in calling poor debtors, or forgive the debt in part or whole."

—MOHAMMAD.

APPENDIX I.

There are altogether twenty-six battles which were fought during the life time of the Prophet and in which he personally took part. I have not dealt all these in the pages of the book, for the only reason that they are not so important, but in order that the reader may have a knowledge of them I give them below in a tabular form. I have added to this table a column of "Causes" which I hope, will furnish to those who blame Islam for the use of sword, that it was only defensive and not for the purpose of promulgation :—

No.	Name	Year	Enemy	Cause	Result
1	Abva	2 A. H.	Bai Zimra	In league with the Quraish they dicided to attack the Muslims.	Owing to the lack of means the Bai Zimra were obliged to beg for truce.
2	Asheera	2 A. H.	Abu Sufyan the Quraish	The fear of the Quraish that their caravan to Syria may be looted.	No actual fighting.
3	Badr I	2 A. H.	Karraz the Quraish	The attack of the Quraish on the pastural fields of Medina.	Enemy escaped.
4	Badr II	2 A. H.	Quraish under Abu Jahl and Abu Sufyan.	The destruction of Islam.	Muslim victory.
5	Kadr	2 A. H.	Banu Salim	Their antagonism towards Islam.	The enemy retreated on hearing of the approach of the Muslim army.

No.	Name	Year	Enemy	Cause	Result
6	Kanikaa	2 A. H.	The Jewish Clan Banu Kanikaa.	Their preparation to fight.	Were allowed to emigrate Syria on request.
7	Sowaig	2 A. H.	Abu Sufyan Quraish	The enemy raided the Muslim neighbourhood.	The enemy fled on the approach of the Muslims.
8	Karkarel Kadr	3 A. H.	The Jewish Clans Salim and Utfan	Preparing to attack Medina.	The enemy escaped.
9	Saelba	3 A. H.	Banu Saelba	do	They all embraced Islam.
10	Uhud	3 A. H.	Quraish	The enemy marched towards Madina with a huge army.	Ended in the retreat of the enemy.
11	Hameer Asad	3 A. H.	Quraish	The decision of the enemy to give a decisive battle.	The enemy retreated on hearing the approach of the Muslims.
12	Banu Nazir	4 A. H.	The Jewish Clan Banu Nazir	The Jews wanted to kill the Prophet.	The enemy were exiled.
13	Banu Lehan	4 A. H.	The Jewish Clan Banu Lehan.	To avenge themselves of the dead.	The enemy escaped.

No.	Name	Year	Enemy	Cause	Result
14	Badr Minor	4 A. H.	Quraish	They decided to attack the Muslims according to their previous boast to do so.	But retreated before they could reach Medina.
15	Zat-e-Rika	5 A. H.	Banu Ismar and Saelba	They collected an army to fight the Muslims.	The enemy fled.
16	Doma Jendal	5 A. H.	Nasrani	They agreed to fight at the instigation of Kaiser.	But fled on hearing of the approach of Muslim army.
17	Mareessee	5 A. H.	Jews	Their desire to fight the Muslims.	The enemy was routed.
18	Khanduq	5 A. H.	Quraish and Jews	They attacked Medina.	The Muslim victory.
19	Banu Kariza	5 A. H.	The Jewish Clan Kariza	Started preparation to fight the Muslims.	The Muslims inflicted a heavy defeat.
20	Yamana	6 A. H.	Quraish	The enemy raided the pasture fields.	The looted property was recovered.
21	Khaibur	7 A. H.	The Jews of Khaibur	Their enmity to Islam and their preparation to fight them.	The victory of the Muslims.

No.	Name	Year	Enemy	Cause	Result
22	Takra	7 A. H.	The Jews	They showed enmity	Were defeated.
23	Fall of Mecca	8 A. H.	Quraish	The breaking of the truce of Hudaibiya by the Quraish	The Muslims entered Mecca as victorious.
24	Hunain	8 A. H.	The Clan Hawazin	The antagonistic attitude of the neighbouring tribes and their preparations to fight	The Muslim victory.
25	Taif	8 A. H.	The people of Taif and the refugees	The runners away of Hunain were chased into Taif and besieged.	Which lasted a long time and finally a truce was negotiated.
26	Tabook	9 A. H.	The Kaiser of Rome	The Christian empire's preparation to fight to the finish and crush Islam	On reaching the frontier the Muslims saw no trace of the enemy and returned without fighting.

APPENDIX II.

Here I propose to give to the reader at a glance the number of wives the Prophet had, and the reasons why he took them in marriage. The charge against the Prophet that he was very indulgent and licentious by some of the critics is strange. It is their strand to which they have for all these centuries hung to decry Islam, after finding no other faults with the Prophet. They say that while restricting the number of wives to four for the others, he allowed himself to have as many as he liked. It is ignorance or sheer obstinacy for, the, Quranic verse which restricts the number of wives to four was revealed when the Prophet had married all. In the Chapter entitled "The Wives of the Prophet" I have tried to answer all such criticism; here I propose to bring down the true facts that led to his marriages, in a tabular form, to help the still dense critics to find that the charge of licentiousness against the Prophet is a fabrication of a diseased mind.

If he was licentious he would not have the nickname of "TRUSTY" from the Quraish for his pure life and for another thing the Quraish who were such a bitter enemy and who were in a better position to know about his life, would have only grappled at the opportunity by making capital out of this to strengthen their cause, if it would have been true. But they were silent for they knew that they cannot tell a lie that would make them look mean. Another fact that the Prophet spent his life from the age of twenty-five to about fifty with one wife Khadija, who was his senior by fifteen years.

No.	Name.	Widow or Spinster.	Year of Marriage.	Cause for Marriage.	Remarks.
1.	Khadija.	Widow aged 40.	Fifteen years before Call.	Was rich and unprotected. Impressed by the integrity, trust-worthiness shown by the Prophet as her Commercial Agent she wished to be married.	The Prophet was 25 at this marriage and spent 25 years in a happy wedlock with her. She was his only wife for that time and was a great help to him.
2.	Sowda.	Widow.	Ten years after the Call.	She had embraced Islam with her husband, and had migrated to	The Prophet married her when his first wife Khadiji was dead and

No.	Name.	Widow or Spinster.	Year of Marriage.	Cause of Marriage.	Remarks.
				Abyssinia with him. On their return her husband was slain, and she was left destitute. Fearing that she may fall into the hands of the unbelievers, the Prophet tried to get her married. But all refused owing to her old age, and the Prophet had therefore to marry her.	when his youth had given place to an old age. Therefore it could not be said that he did so because he was licentious. If he was he could have got any beautiful virgin as his wife, or would have accepted the offer of the beautiful girls made by the Quraish to dissuade him from teaching his new faith.
3.	Ayeisha.	Spinster.	Tenth year of Call.	Abu Bakr, the good Muslim, friend, companion and disciple of the Prophet wished and begged to the Prophet to take his daughter in marriage, and the Prophet to please him, in spite of the disparity between the ages took her in marriage.	After Khadija she was the best wife of the Prophet & proved a great help to the Muslims after the death of the Prophet being a good traditionalist. The enemy wanted to slander, and would have succeeded, but for the verses revealed to dispel all doubts about her purity.
4.	Hafsa.	Widow.	3 A. H.	After the death of her husband her father Omar tried to marry her and approached Abu Bakr and Osman, but they refused. He was much	The Prophet married her to please her father and she knew that, therefore she was not very happy, and often tried to make the Prophet

No	Name.	Widow or Spinster.	Year of Marriage.	Cause of Marriage.	Remarks.
				hurt and complained to the Prophet, who in kindness and to make him happy married her himself.	angry.
5.	Zainub I.	Widow.	3 A. H.	Her two husbands were killed one after another in the cause of Islam. The Prophet finding her destitute and helpless in her old age offered her shelter by marrying her.	She was a very good pious and generous lady and freely gave to the poor and needy.
6.	Umme Salema	Widow.	4 A. H.	Partially the same causes that led to the marriage of Zainub I.	She was also a cousin of the Prophet, and was very dutiful and kind.
7.	Zainub II	Divorced.	5 A. H.	She was the cousin of the Prophet and he had married her to Zaid his liberated slave to uplift the lot of the slaves. But she was not happy with Zaid and there used to be quarrels all the time, with the result that he divorced her. As the Prophet was the instrument of this unhappy union, he felt it his duty to marry her, and remove her cause of unhappiness also to break the	This simple reason for his marrying Zainub was converted into vilification by most of the Christian writers, which got such a hold on the mind of Christendom that Gibbon writes: "At the house of Zaid—he beheld, in a loose undress the beauty of Zainub and burst forth into an ejaculation of deviation and desire. The servile or rateful freedman understood the hint and

No.	Name.	Widow or Spinster.	Year of Marriage.	Cause of Marriage.	Remarks.
				custom which was then prevalent that no one would marry the divorced wife of a man who was slave.	yielded without hesitation to the leave of his benefactor" There could be no greater perversion of truth; even if he had yielded, he would not have: nay could not have continued to be devoted and attached to the Prophet as afore. There is abundant historical evidence to prove that Zaid divorced her by his own free will, and that the Prophet finding him responsible for her unhappiness wedded her to allay it.
8.	Juwairiya.	Widow.	5 A. H.	She was the daughter of a Chief. Her husband was killed in the battle of Mareessee and she fell in the hands of the Muslims as a slave. On account of her position the Prophet did not like her to remain slave, so he freed her and later married her on her request, also to bring about peaceful relations with the Jews.	All the people of her clan that were captured were set free after the marriage. She was a good and pious lady.

No.	Name.	Widow or Spinster.	Year of Marriage.	Cause of Marriage.	Remarks.
9.	Umm-e-Habiba	Widow.	7A. H.	She and her husband migrated to Abyssinia where he adopted the faith of unbelievers again and later died. She was left destitute and the Prophet through the King Negus married her and had her sent for.	She was the daughter of Abu-Sufyan the famous enemy of the Prophet. By her marriage the Prophet had thought of reconciling with the Quraish.
10.	Safiya.	Widow.	7 A. H.	She was the daughter of the Chief of the Jewish Clan Banu Nazir. She fell as a slave to the share of the Prophet who freed her and married her to console all the Muslims with the Jews.	She was a very good woman and remained as such all her life.
11.	Maimoona.	Widow.	7 A. H.	When the Prophet went towards Mecca that year he married her at the wishes of Abbas.	She was a very good lady.
12.	Maria Kibtia or Mary the Copt.		7 A. H.	She was an Egyptian Christian and was sent to the Prophet by the King from Alexandria. The Prophet wedded her.	To her was born the son to Prophet named Ibrahim, but he died at the age of sixteen months.

LANDMARKS IN THE PROPHET'S LIFE.

Dates.	Important details.
A. D. 545 ...	The Prophet's father Abdullah born.
Aetat 1–12 A. D. 570 ...	The Prophet born on Monday, 20th August, 12th Rabi 1, about 55 days after the attack on Mecca by Abraha, the governor of Yemen. Shortly after birth made over to Thuweiba, the slave of Abu Lahab. After being nursed for a few days by Thuweiba, entrusted to the care of Halima who nursed him for about five years.
A. D. 575–576 ...	The Prophet's mother Amina dies at a place called Abwa between Mecca and Mdina.
A. D. 576 ...	Abdul-Muttalib undertakes charge of the Prophet.
A. D. 578 ...	Abdul-Muttalib dies and consigns to his son Abu Talib the guardianship of the Prophet.
A. D. 582 ...	Twelve years of age, the Prophet accompanies Abu Talib to Syrian.
Aetat 12–40 ...	When about 25 the Prophet accompanies a Syrian caravan in charge of Khadija's venture and is married to her shortly afterwards.
A. D. 605 ...	Rebuilding of the Kaba. The Prophet about 35 years of age, fixed the Black Stone in its present place in the Kaba.
Aetat 40–43 A. D. 609–612 A. D. 609 ...	The Prophet (40 years old) receives the First Revelation, sees Warka who comforts him. Earliest converts:- Khadija, Abu Bakr, Ali, Saad, Zohair, Talha, Othman, Abdur Rahman son of Auf, Abu Obeida, Othman, son of Mazun, Abu Selma, Obeida, son of Al-Harith.
Aetat 44–45 A. D. 613–14 A. D. 613 ...	The Prophet puts up in the house of Al-Arkam, in after times styled, the House of Islam.

Dates.	Important details.
Aetat 45–50 A. D. 614–620 A. D. 615 ...	First emigration to abyssinia of 11 men and 4 women including Othman and the Prophet's daughter, Roqiyya, Abdul Raham bin 'Auf and Abdullah bin Masud, etc, and their return to Mecca after three months.
A. D. 615–16 ...	Second emigration to Abyssinia. Conversion of Hamza.
A. D. 615 A. D. 615–16 ...	Conversion of Omar, then 33 years of age and the last to accept Islam in the house of Al–Arkam. The total number of Muslim men at Mecca 40 at a time.
A. D. 616–617 ...	On first night of the first month of seventh year of his mission, the Hashimites, including the Prophet and his family, with the decendants of Al–Muttalib retired into the Shab (quarter) of Abu Talib.
A. D. 617–619 ...	The Prophet and his party confined to the Shab.
A. D. 619 ...	Ban removed. Death of Khadija (December A. D. 619).
A. D. 620 ...	Death of Abu Talib (January A. D. 620). 15 days after the Prophet goes to Taif and is expelled from the city. Marries Sauda and is betrothed to Ayesha. Meets pilgrim party from Medina (March A. D. 620). First pledge of Al-Akaba by men of Medina (April A. D. 620).
A. D. 621 ...	Spread of Islam at Medina and Musab deputed to instruct converts.
Aetat 52–53 A. D. 621–622 ...	The Prophet's (Meiraj) Ascension. Preparations for Second Pledge of Al-Akaba (March 622 A. D. 10th year of the Call). Muslims continue to fly to Medina.
A. H. 1.–June A. D. 622 to January A. D. 623	Flight of the Prophet and Abu Bakar to Medina (June 20, A. D. 622). Arrive Medina Monday 12th Rabi 1, June 28. The Prophet stays in

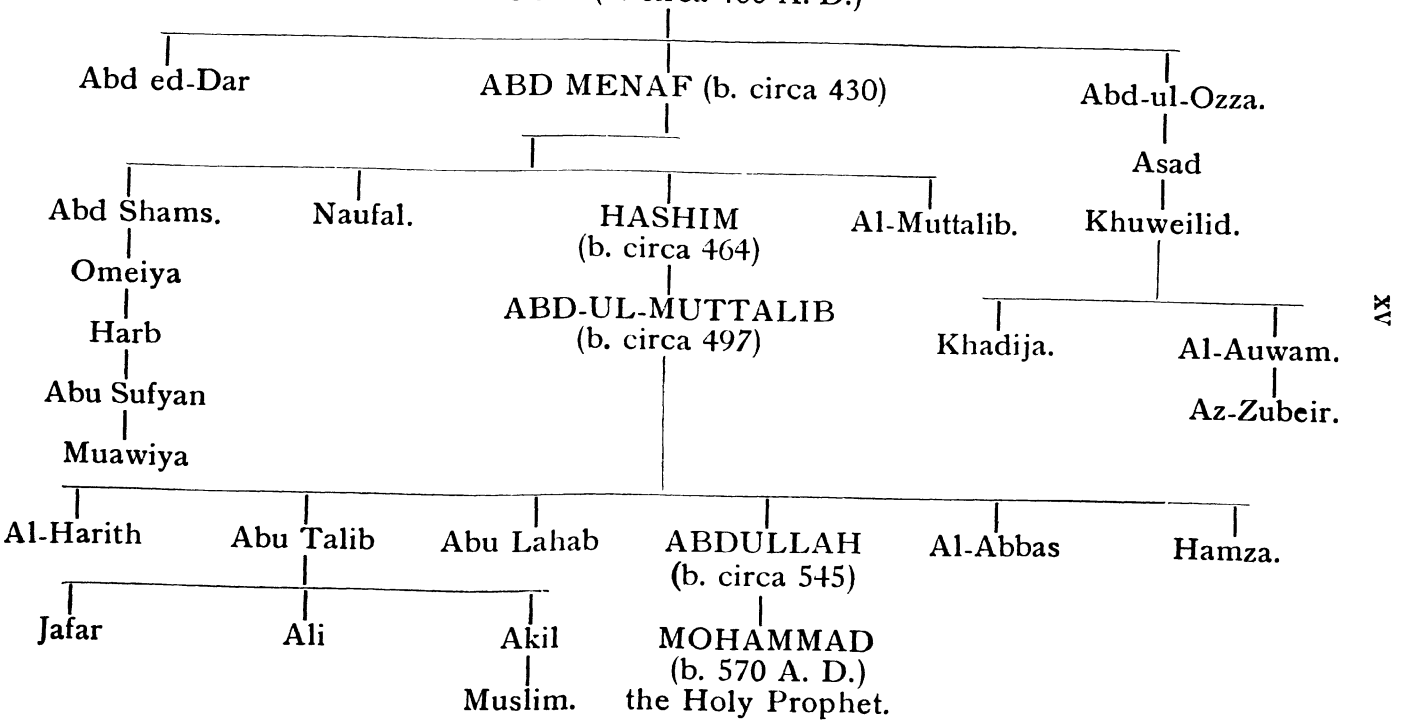
Dates.	Important details.
	Abu Ayub's house for seven months. Marries Ayesha.
A. H. 1, 2.–A. D. 623 ...	The Prophet's Treaty with the Jews at Medina by which they undertook not to go to war without his permission and to refer to decisions all their disputes and controversies. Five daily prayers fixed. The Kibla changed to the Kaba (A.H. 2–Nov. A. D. 623). Fast of Ramazan instituted (December, A. D. 623). Permission to fight the infidels given.
A. H. 2.–January A. D. 624 ...	The Battle of Badr, one of the greatest battles in all human history. Islam victorious, infidels put to flight, their leaders killed. Muslims about 300 and the Meccans 1,000. The death of the Prophet's daughter Roqiyya.
Ramazan. A. H. 2, to Shaban, A. H. 3, A. D. 624. ...	Beni Kainuka besieged, surrendered and forgiven. Kaab bin Al-Ashraf meets his death. The Prophet merries Hafsa (Nov. 624 A. D.). Marriage of Fatima with Ali.
Shawwal, A. H. 3,–January, A. D. 625 ...	In order to avenge their defeat at Badr the Koreish march from Mecca, January A. D. 625. The Battle of Ohod. The Muslims 1,000, the Meccans 3,000. The issue indecisive.
A. H. 4. A. D. 625 ...	Muslim party cut to pieces at Bir-Mauna (May, A. D. 625). Beni an-Nazeer ordered into exile, June A. D. 625.
The fourth and fifth years of Hijra; or from the middle of A. D. 625 to the end of A. D. 626, ...	The Prophet marries Zainab binth Khozeima, Umm-i-Salama and Zainab binth Jahsh. The purdah enjoined on Muslim ladies. Beni Mustalik attacked and captured. The Prophet marries Juweiriya. Ayesha slandered and cleared by divine revelation.
February–March A. D. 627. ...	The Koreish joined by Bedawin tribes march upon Medina. Beni Koreiza desert the Muslims. The Battle of the Trench. The Koreish raise the siege and march away. Beni Koreiza besieged by the

Dates.	Important details.
	Propet and surrender. Their slaughter ordered by Sad bin Moaz.
Sixth year of the Hijrat A. D. 627–628. ...	Abul 'As husband of the Prophet'r daughter. Zainab, accepts Islam. Bani Judham chastised for robbing Dihya, sent by the Prophet on an embassy to Syria.
Dhul-Kada A. H. 6–March A. D. 628	To fulfil his dream the Prophet with 1500 Muslims starts for Mecca to perform Lesser Pilgrimage. The Koreish oppose his advance. The Prophet incamps at Hodeibiya. Truce of Hodeibiya signed. The Muslims come back to Medina, without performing the Pilgrimage. Beni Khoza'a enter into alliance with the Prophet. Embassies sent to Heraclius, Gassanid Prince, King of Persia and to the Mukaukis, the Roman Governor of Egypt. The Persian Governor of Yemen ordered to arrest the Prophet, himself accepted Islam. Despatches to the King of Abyssinia and chief of Yemama.
A. H. 7–August and September A. D. 628. ...	Expedition against Kheibar. Fall of Kheibar. The Prophet marries Safiya. Partakes of a poisoned kid. Abyssinian refugees reach Medina. The Prophet marries Umm-i-Habiba.
A. H. 7–February A. D. 629 ...	The Prophet sets out on Lesser Pilgrimage. Enters Mecca, performs circuit of Kaba. Pubiic prayers performed at the Kaba. The Prophet marries Meimuna. Khalid and 'Amr-bin-Al-As accept Islam.
A. H. 8.,– A. D. 629 contd.	Muslim army marches upon Muta. Jafar and Zaid killed in the battle.
RAMAZAN A. A. 8–January A. D. 630 ...	Beni Bakr, and ally of the Meccans attack Beni Khoza'a an ally of the prophet A. H. 8, December A. D. 622. Truce of Hodeibiya violated by the Koreish. The march on Mecca begins. January 1, 630 A. D. Fall of Mecca. Amnesty proclaimed by the Prophet. Bloodshed strictly prohibited. Battle of Honein. The Beni

Dates.	Important details.
	Hawazin defeated, their families and camp captured, but eventually set at liberty. The Prophet despatches letters to the Chiefs of Al-Bahrein, Oman and the Yemen.
A. H. 8–10,– A. D. 630, 631 ...	The Prophet marries Mary, the copt. Ibrahim born A. H. 8, April A. D. 630. Dies A. H. 10 June or July A. D. 631.
First half of the 9th year of the Hijrat–April 20 to September A. D. 630 ...	Conversion of the son of Hatim of Tai. July A. D. 630. Deputations from Arab tribes A. H. 2, 10. A. D. 630, 631. The ninth year of the Hijrat called the year of deputations.
Second half of the ninth year of the Hijrat–October, A. D. 630, to April, A. D. 631	Gathering of Roman feudatories on Syrian border. March for Tabuk, September, October A. D. 630. Treaty with Christian Prince of Ayla. The Prophet returns to Medina December A. D. 630. Death of Abdullah bin Obei.
A. H. 10,–A. D. 630, 631 ...	Numerous embassies during 10th year. Different Arabian tribes and Chiefs visit the Prophet and accept Islam. Embassy from Najran, A. H. 10. Farewell pilgrimage, A. H. 10, March A. D. 630.
Opening of A. H. 11.–April and May A. D. 632 ...	Three imposters, Toleiha, Museilima and Al-Aswad arise. The first eventually accepted Islam, the last two were crushed, Museilima in the time of Abu Bakr.
A. H. 11,–June A. D. 632 ...	Expedition to Syrian frontier. Osama appointed to command, May 25, A. D. 632. The Prophet passes away June 8, A. D. 632.

N. B. :– 'Aetat' means "at the age of"
'A. H.' „ "after the Prophet's Hijrat" emigratiyn to Medina. Denotes beginning of Muslim Calender.
'A. D.' „ "In the year of our Lord". Denotes Christian Calender.

The following table shows the Lineage of the Holy Prophet–Ed.



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